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"What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul."—ISAIAH XXXVIII. 25.

THEOLOGICA STRUCTURES

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# Sorrowing, yet Bejoicing;

OR,

A NARBATIVE OF SUCCESSIVE BEREAVEMENTS IN A MINISTER'S FAMILY.

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF THE MOTHER'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

By the

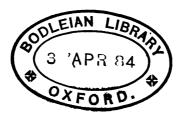
REV. ALEXANDER BEITH, D.D.,

Stirling.

Enlarged Gbition.

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## Preface.

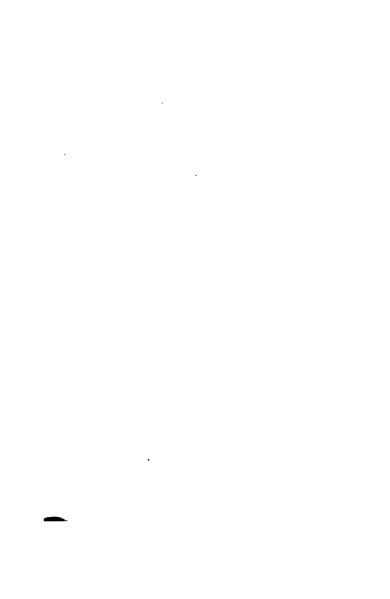
THE domestic affliction described in the following pages, excited the sympathy of many, even strangers to the sufferers, who at the time heard of it. Circumstances connected with this season of trial; in which God was pleased to show the riches and power of his grace, have suggested the publication of the Narrative. Friends, whose judgment was worthy to be trusted, were of opinion that the knowledge of those circumstances ought not to be confined to the narrow circle in which they occurred. And a hope, that a short account of them may prove useful, through the divine blessing, has overcome the reluctance which must ever be felt to disclose to the public eye, either the privacy of the domestic hearth. or the secret feelings of the mind, on such an occasion.

Though it be seldom that such an accumulation of distress is inflicted on families, few are, at all times, exempted from sorrows similar in kind, however they may differ in degree. Such seasons have been kept in view in preparing the Narrative. It may fall into the hands of those who are in trouble as we were, and may prove to them like the voice which Bunyan's Pilgrim heard before him in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. It may speak encouragement and comfort to some such mourner, by testifying that he is not the only traveller in that dark region, and that no strange thing has happened to him in his affliction. Nay, it may produce a blessed hope that the cloud will pass; and a no less grateful assurance that, even whilst it continues, though dark and lowering to those who behold it from without, it is luminous, by the presence of the Lord, within.

In the sick-room of our dear children, whilst watching by them, I found several little books, which, in the days of health, pious friends had sent them—records of those who, in childhood

and early youth, had been called away from the tender affection of earthly parents to dwell in their heavenly Father's house-books which we had often perused together, and of which we had often conversed, but whose value I had never justly appreciated till now. Though unpretending in their appearance, I recognised in them friendly visitors for such a time as this. them the good Shepherd spoke to us, saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten"-"Fear not"-" When thou passest through the waters. I will be with thee." If the following pages be blessed to accomplish the same end to other sufferers in the hour of domestic affliction. and be made effectual, in any measure, to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," the object of the writer will be fully accomplished.

MANSE OF GLENELG, INVERNESS-SEIRE, December, 1638





### Second Preface.

THE "NARRATIVE OF SUCCESSIVE BEREAVEMENTS IN A MINISTER'S FAMILY" has had its place for nearly thirty years among books of a similar kind. It now appears with new matter.

The reluctance to disclose to the public eye the family afflictions of that time was overcome by a hope that the recital might prove edifying and comforting to other sufferers—such as it might seem good to God to afflict as He had afflicted us. A numerous class, at all times, in this vale of tears, they are who mourn for tender little ones taken from them. Might not our story give them encouragement—might it not help their faith in God?

A no less numerous class, at all times, they are who mourn over separations of even a more painful character—of wives from their husbands, and of husbands from their wives. Might not the recital of the events connected with another sorrow prove encouraging, comforting, and instructive to them? With regard to such unions it is written: "The time is short. They that have wives must be as though they had none;" and, it may be added, They that have husbands must be as though they had none. Separation is inevitable. It must come, whichever may be the survivor, and how much so ever the anticipation may sadden the heart. Might not our experience guide others in their preparation for the solemn time—preparation which should crown that time with joy?

Such considerations have weighed with me; yet the previous publication must, I know, be the chief or only justification of the addition now made. But for that, this should not have appeared. The persuasion—whether well or ill founded—that the one appropriately follows the other, the solicitation of friends, and the hope of good, by the divine blessing, to follow, have overcome my reluctance. With my whole heart,

I desire to encourage others with myself to trust that, through faith, "Out of weakness we shall be made strong."

> "Sprinkled with Christ's atoning blood Safely before our God we stand, As on the rock the prophet stood, Beneath his shadowing hand."

STIRLING, May 1867.



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## Sorrowing, get Bejoicing.

#### CHAPTER I.

"Jehovah hear thee in the day When trouble he doth send."

About a year ago, only, our family consisted of seven dear children—the oldest twelve, the youngest approaching two years of age—five being girls, and two boys. They were then in the enjoyment of perfect health. In the preceding winter they had had measles, but the complaint, on running its course, though preceded by influenza, seemed only to have strengthened their constitutions. No serious ailment had ever afflicted any of them, and no breach had ever been made in their number. Residing in a remote and secluded situation, at a distance from relations and friends, they knew no society but that of each other; and, happy in this, they had never de-

sired to know more. Like "olive plants," they grew up around our table, and the goodness of the Lord to us in them often filled our hearts.

At the above-mentioned period, hooping-cough appeared in our parish. Of a mild type, though we avoided exposing the children to infection, when it seized them we felt no alarm, nor, such being its character, did we regret that it had taken them. A more favourable season could have been desired, but, strong in hope, we anticipated the result which had followed measles, and rejoiced in the prospect of our darlings surpassing both complaints, not in safety only, but with comparative ease. These shoals passedthe most dangerous to bodily health which beset the outset of life-we looked forward with confidence to the voyage which lay beyond. We had ever sought for them, from Him who had given them existence, "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" but, knowing the value of the promise, we had also often asked that their "days might be long upon the land"—and we expected the blessing for his own name's sake. But perhaps we too much forgot that "God's thoughts are not our thoughts," and that "by terrible things in righteousness," he often, as "the God of salvation," answers prayer.

The season, as some will remember, became extremely rigorous towards the close of the year, and continued so until the summer months. Nothing unusual appeared in the case of the children before the close of January; but they then began to suffer from fever-always an attendant of hooping-cough. In the commencement, and during a great part of the progress of the disease, they had none: when it appeared, as we knew it to be a natural symptom, no alarm was produced. For a considerable period the severity of the fever did not amount to what caused any alteration in their usual habits-they were still able to attend their governess, and to proceed with their studies. But towards the end of January and beginning of February, Matilda, our eldest, became so much oppressed, that she was withdrawn from the school-room; and, as her mother had been in delicate health, she became her companion during her convalescence. After a little, however, the fever seemed to yield to the usual treatment, and her speedy recovery was expected with confidence. The other children, also, soon after this, became worse, and were confined to the sick-room; but they soon began to amend, and appeared rapidly recurring to their wonted health. The cough had nearly

disappeared—its severity was quite gone, and with the anticipated fine weather of spring, we hoped that all would be well again.

Whoever has read Mr Bickersteth's "Domestic Portraiture" of Mr Richmond's family, must have been struck with the truth, as well as beauty, of the remarks occurring there on the difficulty of judging of the state of the religious feeling in young persons. Diffidence and backwardness to speak of their spiritual condition, natural to youth, and for the most part so becoming at that period, chiefly operate to produce this. Yet there is nothing more deeply exciting to the mind of a parent who knows the value of the soul, when dangerous sickness has seized th youthful group, than to be assured of the state of their hearts in the sight of God-as holy Mr Richmond's feelings, described in the work alluded to, testify. Death, in any circumstances, is in itself dreadful; but when we know, or have good reason to hope, that the "second death" shall have no power over those who are about to be torn from us, the last enemy is stripped of all his terrors. Parents, therefore, may sometimes be relieved of much distress, by remembering that children are not to be judged of as those who have come to maturer years. That dis-

coveries may be made of their spiritual state, calculated to fill the hearts of parents with adoring gratitude, and their mouths with praise. our happy experience, which we desire to record for the direction and comfort of others, testifies. Though "slow to speak," children may be "swift to hear;" and, when living in a spiritual atmosphere-when the conversation listened to by them, the books read, and the example witnessed, tend heavenward, like the unobtrusive plant, which, unnoticed, imbibes nourishment from every genial breath, their youthful minds may be secretly extracting, from the various influences to which they are subjected, that "hidden wisdom" which, as it is by the Spirit, ultimately produces "fruit unto life eternal." Hence it follows, that parents who endeavour to train their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord "-all whose exertions in the use of means are accompanied with persevering earnest prayer, are not entitled to conclude that He is not dealing savingly with their souls—that no effectual change is being wrought, because the spiritual conversation which they desiderate is awanting, or because they still see in their children the gay vivacity which health and the society of each other naturally produce. Nor, when sickness

comes, and the conversation then turns on the solemn things of the soul and eternity, are they always to suppose that the feeling in them which promotes this exercise has had its origin in the altered circumstances in which they are then placed. Natural fear operating on an alarmed conscience may sometimes account for it; but affliction, too, may be the means of quickening the living seed which was previously sown in silence, and of forcing to rapid maturity those spiritual buddings which, hitherto, they knew not whether to consider tares or wheat; and to judge of this as in every case no more than the production of days of darkness contrasted with those of youthful joy, would argue but little knowledge of human nature, and would be applying to children a rule by which they ought not to be tried.

From the womb they may be sanctified, but the development of the work of the Spirit, so that it may be seen of men, must await God's time; and it will ever be in perfect consistency with their circumstances and opportunities—though Christians, they will still be children. In the case of the sickly who, from this cause, are, in their earliest years, separated from those of their own age, and who, as they cannot engage in their childish sports, cease to have a relish for them.

and are thus thrown almost entirely into the society of the advanced in life-when a work of grace really exists, the displays of its exercise will be powerfully affected by circumstances of such a nature. In cases of this kind, most remarkable testimonies have often been borne to the power of divine grace in children of almost infantile years, characterized by a depth of reflection, an extent of knowledge, and a maturity of understanding, incredible to those who have not witnessed it. Facts corroborative of this remark are innumerable. But the good seed may be sown in childhood, and remain in the heart where no such external influences prevail to urge it to a precocious ripeness. The productiveness may then differ in degree, but it will accord in nature with the other. The wounded branch, ere it die, may put forth what appears an unnatural energy, and may bend to the earth with its load; but the scanty fruit and richer foliage of the healthy, will, no less certainly, indicate the character of the "root" from which they mutually derive their productiveness. A season of affliction, such as passed over us, may come, when the luxuriance of harvest, unlooked for so soon, however desired, may be made most rapidly to appear. But, should such a time be withheld,

years may pass, and the events of life may appear to produce their usual effects; the "clods of the valley" may seem to triumph, and the labours of a pious upbringing to fail: until at last "the time to favour" arrives, and the power that is not "of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man" is exerted, "until the Spirit is poured from on high;"—then "the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest," and the ransomed of the Lord are seen to be at once a chosen generation and a peculiar people. In proof of which remark, I refer once more to the history of Mr Richmond's family.

Reflections such as these were often strongly suggested amidst the health and happiness which our youthful group so long enjoyed; and they constituted the source of much consolation when troublous times at last overtook them. With prayerful expectation we often looked forward to the period when their light should "break forth as the morning," when personal godliness, with usefulness in their day and generation, should testify to the reality of that spiritual life, indications of the existence of which, we sometimes hoped, we already discovered. But God had provided some better thing for us; for times and seasons are in his power.

The education which we had endeavoured to give our children might be truly said to be scrip-Whilst secular learning was prosecuted tural. with much success, every exertion was made, in and out of the school-room, to store their minds with the Word of God. The great truth was ever kept before them, that "the wisdom which cometh from above"-the saving knowledge of God, is alone truly important—that this is the one thing needful, whilst all the rest might be dispensed with. Catechetical instruction was confined to the Mothers' and Assembly's Catechisms; and, with these, hymns, tracts, and religious narratives, suited to their capacity, were largely furnished them, and eagerly perused. And, though last in this enumeration, certainly not least in importance, was the proving of Scripture truths from the inspired Word. Under this discipline, we were frequently amazed at the clear comprehension of Christian doctrine, in all its bearings, manifested by them. We knew, indeed, but too truly, that mere human acquirement may be mistaken for spiritual life—the illumination of the understanding for a change of heart; but we also knew that God can dwell in the soul of a child-that he can quicken, as well as give light; and conscious as we were of imperfection and shortcoming in all that we did, our secret thoughts at times suggested that "flesh and blood" had not revealed to them what they knew.

On one occasion, when the exercises of the evening of the Sabbath were past, and the other children had retired, Matilda, being alone with her mother, she said to her, "How concerned am I, Matilda, that you should feel as well as know the truth." After some hesitation, and as if ashamed to confess it, she answered, "Mama, I do feel, and I have been nights that I have not slept under anxiety about my soul." In her illness, we ascertained that she had been much awakened during the prevalence of cholera in the country, though the pestilence had never visited our neighbourhood, and that then, though little more than six years of age, she had often retired for secret prayer on other occasions besides her stated seasons. Sermons heard had also sometimes aroused her. She spoke of one particularly from Ps. xxv. 11, preached by Mr M'Donald. Urquhart, on the occasion of the baptism of a little sister, and repeated its divisions and particulars. All these things, we are now fully persuaded, were the gracious strivings of that mighty though unseen Power, which, unperceived in its

operations, can reveal to babes the hidden mysteries of true godliness, when they are concealed from the wise and prudent.

Though saving impressions may be borne down they are not of necessity uprooted by the hilarity and playfulness of healthy childhood. The impetuosity of the current may bend, so as to cover and conceal the plants of heavenly growth which have sprung in the heart; but when occasions arrive which cause this current to subside, where they exist, they raise their heads again with undiminished vigour. Dispensations which bring eternity near to the youthful mind, constitute such occasions: for then the word of truth bears most powerfully upon the conscience. A season of this kind was granted our family when measles entered it—a year previous to the visitation of hooping2 cough. Neither did the children nor we at any time apprehend a fatal termination; but so much of serious and solemn feeling was produced in all. the usual flow of animal spirits was so subdued, as to afford, in our apprehension, a favourable opportunity to test the tenderness of their hearts with reference to divine things. How great, then, was our delight to see them-especially the older ones-eagerly turn, of their own accord, to the one blessed subject, and desire only the Word of God, with such books as exhibited its truths. to be read to them! How cheerfully were their oft-repeated requests to be gratified in this way complied with! And how blessed the reflection then, but especially now, that in such occupation they sought and found their happiness-their parents never appearing so beloved by them as when conversing on, and recommending the things which belonged to their everlasting peace! I shall never forget my sensation of sanctified pleasure on the occasion of their recovery from their ailment, when I invited them into my study, that we might together acknowledge the good providence of God, and give him thanks that they had all been brought in safety through a dangerous disease—their alacrity to engage in the duty-their solemnity when engaged, and their deep feeling when it ended. Alas! little did I then think, that in one short twelvemonth I should be weeping over the graves of those who then were most affected! But how different should be my tears, had I not such recollections to dwell on, and could I not recall those occasional gleams of heavenly sunshine, which formed the precursors of that glorious illumination which it pleased the Lord to shed upon their latter end!

Let not parents who desire to be faithful think

lightly of the slightest intimations of feeling in their tender offspring. The folly bound up in their hearts may shade the work of the Lord, without extinguishing it. Let them watch and pray over "the good thing" which He may have found there; in due time they may reap, if they faint not.

Matters continued with our poor invalids much as I have already described them, till about the middle of the month of March. I had engaged to assist at the communion in Glasgow, which was to be celebrated in the beginning of April, and it now approached the time at which it should be necessary for me to leave home. The medical attendant had recommended change of air for them all, and especially for Matilda, who had by this time so far recovered as to make it advisable that she should accompany me. A beloved aunt of hers, who had passed the winter with us, and whose conversations on religious topics. Matilda told us afterwards she believed had been blessed to her, was about to be married to another valued relative, and our dear child was asked to form one of the party on the occasion. As I was to perform the ceremony on my way to Glasgow, it was arranged that she should accompany me so far, and await my return. The little preparations required for the occasion in view, accordingly, claimed some attention for the present; but although Matilda seemed pleased with the prospect of being my travelling companion, and of the happy meeting of friends to which we looked forward, she exhibited none of that eagerness or impatience which might have been expected in one of her age. When we recollected her lively expression of warmth of heart on ordinary occasions, her present composure could not but affect us. Alas! had the veil been lifted off futurity but for a short moment, what a season of sorrow should we have beheld at the very threshold—contrasting so strongly with present anticipations!

To prepare Matilda for the journey which we contemplated, it was thought proper to accustom her to the open air. She was, therefore, on two or three occasions, taken out when the weather permitted; and her general health seemed to benefit by the exercise. As the time drew nigh for our departure, we ceased to fear any interruption of our project; and as we were assured that change of scene was all, under Providence, that was required for her perfect recovery, our hopes were high that her usual health would soon be restored. But, a few days before the time fixed

for setting out, she caught a fresh cold, by what means we could never ascertain, and a return of the fever ensued. At first, we hoped that the attack, which appeared by no means formidable, would speedily pass; but the fever lingered beyond all our calculations, and it soon became evident that poor Matilda could not, with safety, be exposed to the fatigue and risks of the purposed journey, and that, for a little longer, she must be confined to her room.

In ordinary circumstances, such a disappointment was calculated to be severely felt by a child of twelve. The mild composure which she exhibited under it, accordingly, deeply interested and delighted our hearts, while it excited all our sympathy. No murmur was heard, no regret expressed; and though at that time she had not revealed to us the state of her mind, nor had we discovered the holy principle by which she was animated, we now know that her patience was the fruit of that saving grace which renews the will, and brings it into conformity to the perfect will of God.

This relapse distressed us much in the circumstances in which it occurred; but we felt no alarm for her safety. The solemn duty on which I was called from home could alone reconcile us to the

temporary absence which it demanded; and the few days of separation from my family which were required, appeared a trial which no former separation ever had. But as I had the private opinion of the medical attendant, giving assurance that nothing serious appeared in Matilda's case, and that every symptom indicated a speedy recovery, a sense of duty overcame my feelings of affection; and, urged both by our dear child and her mother, I left home, in the expectation that, at farthest, in a fortnight, I should rejoin them all in happier circumstances. Alas! how little do we know what so short a period may bring forth; and how slow of heart are we to believe that we cannot boast of to-morrow!

"Oh! what is life! Tis like the bow
That glistens in the sky:
We love to see its colours glow—
But while we look they die,
Life fails as soon: to-day 'tis here—
To-morrow it may disappear."





## CHAPTER II.

"O Grave! where is thy triumph now?
And where, O Death! thy sting?"

Ir was a day or two after I had left home, that Matilda disclosed, for the first time, the whole state of her feelings. Occasional expressions had fallen from her to myself before, which, with her intelligence, and the general tenor of her conduct, had produced in my mind the happiest anticipations; but the unreserved avowal of her experience had not been made till now.

Her mother had concluded their usual exercise of reading the Scriptures, and had sat down beside her. Matilda began by saying, that she had for some time back been anxious to open her mind to her, but that she could never find resolution to do it. This she deeply regretted; and particularly, that she had not spoken to me before I left home. She stated, that she had now

made up her mind not to defer it, as she considered it sinful to have concealed the state of her feelings from her parents so long. She then lamented, in bitter terms, her being a sinner, and that she could not keep from sinning.

"When I think," she exclaimed, "that God cannot look upon sin but with horror, is it not dreadful that I cannot keep from sinning; and when I think of God's love towards me, in not sparing his own Son, it grieves me sorely, and wounds my feelings, that I can so sin.—Doesn't it hurt your feelings, mama?"

"It ought certainly to do so," was her mother's reply; "but I am afraid it does not enough."

She then said, "We are poor, weak, sinful creatures; but Christ will do all for us."

Her mother remarked, that it was through Christ alone the pardon of sin could be obtained; to which she replied, "O yes; and I am constantly praying that my sins may be washed away in the fountain of His blood. I have often had convictions before, but they were not permanent—now, I cannot avoid having before my eyes, day and night, what a sinner I am. I am so ignorant, I require a great deal of teaching; and I hope you will every day be speaking to me on these subjects. I will be praying that the Spirit

may bless your instructions. I hope you will be praying for me too; and I am sure my dear papa prays for me where he is."

The conversation was here interrupted by some one coming into the room. Though reserve, as to the secret of her heart, was abandoned in regard to her mother, it still appeared too sacred to be revealed to others; and in such a matter she shrank sensitively from display.

Her humiliation, under a sense of sin, truly bespoke the presence of that influence for which she in secret prayed—the powerwhich alone can produce "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation." In her view, God's law "was exceeding broad;" its spirituality and extent such as to cause her to record, against herself, a sentence of condemnation as the chief of sinners. Yet her sense of mercy in Christ at least equalled her humiliation. She beheld him as God's unspeakable gift to sinners, loving her—able and willing to save. Thus she enjoyed the privilege of the adoption of the children of God.

On the succeeding day, her mother and she had engaged in reading, as usual, when she again spoke with great feeling of the evil of sin, and deplored her condition in the sight of God.

"How harrowing to my feelings," she ex-

claimed—the large tears rolling over her face, "that I cannot keep from sinning! When the Lord is pleased to restore me to health, I trust I shall live differently from what I have done hitherto. And when papa comes home, I am resolved to conceal none of my feelings from him. I know my great ignorance, and how much I require to be taught. He and you will be teaching me—and we shall be so happy together, speaking of spiritual things; for although I know a good deal of the Scriptures, I do not understand them as I ought."

Thus did she breathe the aspirations of her soul after increased knowledge of God, holiness, and spiritual enjoyments. Her mother spoke to her of the freeness of the gospel, and of its glory—Christ being willing to receive the chief of sinners; when she listened with most marked delight, and seemed to derive comfort, in the highest sense, from looking to Jesus as a crucified and exalted Saviour.

"Have you any doubt, my dear," her mother asked, "of Christ's willingness to receive you?"

"O no, mama!" was the immediate reply; "think of his own beautiful words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' and again, 'Ho, every one

that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

These passages were quoted by her with such emphasis, and her whole manner and expression so struck her mother, that, for the first time, an idea took possession of her mind that probably the Lord was preparing her for an early removal from the world, and that in her youth she might be called away. This solemn reflection produced a pause in the conversation. After a little, her mother said to her, with caution, that she might not be startled, "Matilda, do you think yourself dying?"

"No," was the reply; and, with a somewhat alarmed look, she asked, "Do you think me dying, mama?" She immediately continued, without waiting for the answer—"but nobody can say how any sickness may end."

One of the symptoms of her complaint was extreme deafness, which proved a distressing hindrance to free conversation. It often, however, afforded opportunities of discovering her secret experience; for, during the night especially, and at other times also, when, from this cause, unconscious of the presence of any human witness, her prayers were uttered aloud, and expressed the

most humble dependence on sovereign mercy, with earnest longings for the graces of the Spirit, and meetness for heaven. The correctness of expression, as well as depth of feeling, struck every one, as indicating an understanding wonderfully matured, through grace, as well as a heart savingly changed. Supplications, uttered in terms like the following, were often listened to by those who watched by her:—

"O Lord, I am unworthy; but I believe that for the sake of Christ thou wilt hear and answer me. O wash me in the fountain of his blood. Give me a new heart, to love and serve thee. I would give myself up to thee, spirit, soul, and body; and I beseech thee, O Lord, to let me rest satisfied with nothing short of thyself. Sanctify unto me this sickness, and give me patience to bear it. Bless my parents, my brothers and sisters, with all that are dear to me in the whole world. O give me thy blessing, and accept me, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

On the occasion of the conversation related above, she complained of her deafness; and stated her distress, that she could not hear distinctly what was spoken to her. Her mother reminded her that God could make up for that disadvantage a hundred-fold; and that the teaching of his Spirit was infinitely better than that of all men. She seemed quite comforted, and said, "I will pray, then, to be kept from impatience under my trial."

On the Sabbath, when her mother came to read to her, and had finished the usual exercise from the Scriptures, she asked whether she should then go on to read some of the small books which they were so fond of hearing. Her answer was, "O, no; those books are very good, but the Bible is the only book for me now."

On being asked what part of the Scriptures she preferred, the answer was, "What I may understand."

The 11th chapter of the Gospel by John was selected; and she listened with close attention and deep interest. When her mother came to the words, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live"—"Stop," she cried, "there is the truth,—'He that believeth, though he were dead yet shall he live;'" uttering the words "believeth," and "dead," with all the emphasis she could employ.

Her mother called her attention to Martha's blessed state, when Jesus asked her if she believed this, and she was able to reply, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ." "O

yes," she answered; and seemed lost for a little in deep thought, responding to her mother's observation, "No one could say that unless taught of God."

She then spoke of the Psalms, and remarked, that they were her favourite portion of the Scriptures; as in reading them she always felt, that whatever her circumstances, there she found something to suit her. After some observations of this kind, she requested the 103d, the 51st, the 84th, and the 62d, to be read to her.

On this day her mother first became alarmed and thought her in danger. The medical attendant was still of his original opinion, and expected that she was now at the crisis of what did not at any time appear a formidable relapse of fever from cold. He had, on this morning, administered some strong medicines; and as the exertion of hearing, when she was addressed, exhausted her much, it was necessary to leave her undisturbed as much as possible.

On Monday, she spoke often of the vanity of the world, and seemed deeply impressed with the folly of seeking or expecting anything satisfactory in it. The Lord was loosening all her affections from things seen and temporal, and preparing her to leave them without a sigh. He was teaching her to judge them by the rule of those who, in every age, have confessed themselves pilgrims and strangers because they were made to feel it; and who, crucified to the world, have desired "a better country, that is an heavenly."

She spoke much also, on this day, of her own sinfulness, and of the mercy of God in Christ.

After enlarging for some time on this topic, she exclaimed, "Well might David say, 'Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." (Psalm lxxxvi.)

From the commencement of hooping-cough, there had been, in Matilda's case, the peculiarity of great difficulty in recovering breath after the fit. As the cough became milder in its character, and when it began to disappear, she was occasionally much distressed with what we took to be asthmatic spasms. Previous to the relapse, they had, in a measure, ceased; but in the beginning of this week they returned again, and became more frequent, as well as more painful.

On Tuesday, she expressed a desire to be removed from the bed on which she was lying, to a small couch, which could be moved at pleasure, and from which she could look out upon the fields, where the operations of spring were going busily forward. While there, she seemed full of gratitude for her comforts and mercies, and spoke much and often of the love of God in bestowing them so abundantly on her, "such a sinner, and so unworthy." On one of these occasions, she cried, "Is it not dreadful, mama, that I have lived in this world for twelve years in sin?—but I hope the Lord will enable me, if I am spared, and when I get better, to live differently in time to come."

She then asked her mother's pocket Bible, as her own was that used in the school-room, and too large to put under the pillow, that she might be perusing it when her strength permitted, and when no one was at hand to read to her. She took it, accordingly, and placed it under her pillow with much apparent satisfaction.

"Mama," she asked, "what would a new pocket Bible cost?" "About five or six shillings," she was told. "Then, I have a little money now, and I shall keep all I get till I make up the price." She was reminded that she already had a nice pocket Testament, given her lately by a kind uncle; to which she replied, "O yes, but there are so many things in the Old Testament, too, which I like to be reading, that I am anxious for the other."

In course of this day she was left alone in the room for a little with the other children. called them about her, when, taking up some small delicacies which had been provided for herself, and were lying near her, she shared them, saying,"Take these among you-I have not much to give away; but I can speak to you of God." She then addressed them seriously on spiritual things, until interrupted by some one entering the apartment. How little did she or they think that, ere another sun should sink below the distant mountain which bounded their prospect from the place where they were thus engaged, the tongue which addressed them should be silent in death, and the spirit whose longings it expressed, be returned to the bosom of its Father!

Next day was Wednesday, the 11th April. Her mother rose early, about six o'clock, to relieve the servant who had watched during the night. When she entered the sick-room, Matilda turned towards her with great animation, and the happiest expression of countenance.

"Come away, my dear mama," she exclaimed,
"I have slept well, and feel quite refreshed—I
am a great deal better. We shall have such a
happy day—my hearing is greatly improved, and

we shall be all the morning alone. I have just been giving myself up, spirit, soul, and body, to Jesus, and I have been repeating my psalms and chapters;—but I am so glad to see you that you may speak to me, and that I may ask what I want to know."

Her mother's heart rejoiced; for, from her appearance, she then, and both she and the doctor, for a great part of the day, were encouraged in the opinion that the crisis was past, and that her recovery, though it should be tedious, might now, under Providence, be hopefully looked for.

When they were set down together, the conversation turned on the union of Christ with his people—its indissoluble nature under all circumstances. Her soul seemed to repose on the doctrine with a peace not to be understood but by those who experienced it. The following passage from the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as bearing on the subject, was then read: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor prin-

sipalities, nor powers, nor tilings present, nor things to come, nor heighs, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The precious truth seemed as "hidden manna" to her, and she expressed herself comforted and refreshed. How nourishing to the hungry soul is God's Word, when he has epened the heart to receive it in faith—the soul that is in Christ, "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of its inheritance."

A pause took place in the conversation, and after a little she appeared dull and cast down. When her mother inquired the reason, she said, "I find all my desires to be conformed to the will of God in vain—I cannot do or be what I wish, or keep from doing what I hate."

She was still within the reach of "sin's suggestions and Satan's temptations." Her spirit, which aimed at perfect holiness, and desired to soar above the polluted atmosphere of a world lying in the wicked one, felt and mourned the load which seemed to render its every effort fruitless. Where, in such circumstances, could it look for direction, but to that "light shining in a dark place," which reveals the experience of all

who are taught of God, and tells of such trials in their case, even in the near approach to heaven? Her mother read to her from the close of the 7th chapter of the Romans: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against . the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

"That," she cried, "is exactly as I feel, mama;" repeating, once and again, with evident comfort the apostle's declaration, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

She was now required to lie still for a time, as some medicine had been administered. When

the conversation was resumed, it turned on the temptations to which we are exposed from Satan and our own evil hearts.

On this she remarked,—"Well, mama, to tell you the truth, Satan tried me very sorely one day of late."

Her mother immediately asked in what she had been tempted by him.

"He tried to make me think that it is too soon for me to give myself up to Christ—that I am too young—that there is plenty of time for that hereafter; and he succeeded, for one day, to keep me from prayer; but he has not come near me since."

The doctor had enjoined quiet and silence; her mother reminded her of this. "O, very well, mama," she said; "but if you knew the good it does to both my body and soul, when we get talking alone on these subjects!" Her favourite psalms were read to her, and she lay in silence for about two hours.

When breakfast was sent up, on being raised in the bed that she might take it, a sudden spasm almost deprived her of breath. It produced a startling scream; but she instantly recovered, expressing a hope that her mother was not alarmed, adding, that she had herself been afraid for a

moment, but now felt quite well again. After a little, she expressed a desire to be removed to the couch on which she had lain the preceding day; and when she had partaken of something to strengthen her for the exertion, her request was complied with.

When placed comfortably as she had wished, she exclaimed,—"O what mercies are granted such an unworthy creature as I am, were there nothing more than the kind parents God has bestowed on me!" Thus she lay for considerably above an hour, until her mother, conceiving that she would be more at ease in the bed, proposed replacing her there. She immediately assented, saying, "I prefer this; but if you wish me to remove, I am quite willing." She was accordingly placed in bed.

No sooner was this accomplished, than the spasms and breathlessness recurred to a degree much greater than they had previously been experienced. The alarm for her state, which had subsided in her mother's mind, was, on witnessing this, painfully renewed. The medical attendant, too, who had resolved on leaving her in course of the forenoon, thought it advisable to alter this resolution. The state of the weather, in the early part of the day, had prevented his

departure, and thus was he, in Providence, detained for the occasion when his kind services were most required.

About two o'clock, she, for the first time, suddenly complained of pain in the heart—various means to remove which were employed in vain. A slight alleviation of the suffering was effected, but nothing more, and thus matters continued for some time.

Her mother now looked for her death, although she did not yet think it near. A day or two before, she feared that the complaint would fall upon the lungs, and that the dear sufferer, after a lingering illness, would become a victim of consumption. She now trembled that her frame might sink more speedily before the power of the exhausting ailment under which she laboured. It was evident that she herself had, as yet, no apprehension that her life was in danger.

The dear child had, in course of the forenoon, been counting the days until my return. "One—two—three—till Saturday," she said, "and then papa—my dear papa, who used to feed me,—will be come! O how happy I shall be!" But it was not the will of our heavenly Father that we should ever meet again in this world; and, O! how little had this entered into our cal-

culations when we parted, so short a time before!

Under impressions of the change which now appeared in Matilda's condition, her mother was seized with great anxiety. She conceived it to be her duty to warn her of her true circumstances; but from this the medical attendant strongly dissuaded her in the meantime. She inquired earnestly whether he thought she could survive my return; but it was impossible to give any decided opinion. How trying that hour of agony no language can describe!

The tender patient's suffering, in the meantime, became very great; the sight of which so distressed her mother, that, to conceal her emotion, she was compelled to quit the room. Matilda, on observing this, sent the doctor to inquire for her; expressing her fear, that, in her delicate state, she should do herself injury by giving way to sorrow. It so evidently increased the dear child's suffering, to witness her mother's distress, that, by a strong effort, she suppressed the outward appearance of it, and returned to the room. When she came in, Matilda's face was turned away from the front of the bed, so that, ere she perceived her, she had come up close to where she lay, and said that she had now come back.

"O mama, I am so glad of that!" was the reply. "I am surprised to see you so much distressed—if it were grandmama; but I am now much better, although I have still a little of this breathlessness; but," she added, "don't you be anxious: sit where you are, for I like to feel your very body touching me."

"O, my darling Matilda, give yourself up to Christ."

"Yes," she said, "my dear mama. I am so oppressed just now—but when I get relief."

In a little she became easier. A few drops of laudanum were administered; but it had scarcely any effect in alleviating the acute pain with which she was hopelessly struggling.

All now retired to take dinner excepting her mother, who was left alone with her. She requested to be turned with her face to the front of the bed. To aid in effecting this, her mother directed her to put her arms around her neck, by which means she might raise herself easily; but this she declined, as causing unnecessary trouble, and said that she could turn without any help; which she accordingly did.

So soon as a view of her face was obtained, her mother saw that death was very near; the melancholy fact was too truly inscribed on every feature. Just as the doctor, who had been immediately recalled, entered the room, she was seized with a dreadful spasm, accompanied with most acute pain at heart. With an imploring look she asked for something to relieve her, and offered to take any medicine, however bitter. The only reply was the melancholy communication, made with tears, that nothing could relieve her.

Her mother then declared, aside, to the medical attendant, that she could no longer defer telling her child that her dissolution was near. He had formerly dissuaded from this course, with the humane intention of sparing his patient's feelings; but the time now was evidently short, and he gave his ready assent.

"My darling Matilda," her mother then said aloud to her, "Jesus is coming to take you to himself—the hand of death is on you!"

For a moment she seemed startled and alarmed, but speedily recovered her composure.

- " Does the doctor think me dying?" she asked.
- "Yes, he does," was the heart-rending reply.
- "How long do you think, doctor, I can live?"
- "I cannot say how long, my dear—the God who gave you life alone knows."

On this she turned to her mother, and with a

look of earnestness and solemnity the most striking, which awed all who were present, and went to their hearts, she said—

- "Mama, I have concealed nothing from you—you know the whole state of my mind and all about me—do you think that I am resting on Christ?"
- "Yes, my dear," was the answer; "I do believe that you are. You know that you have often told me that you felt and were assured there is no other salvation but to be washed in His blood."
- "O yes, I have," she said; and, lifting up her hands with great solemnity, added, "well, then, I am not afraid to die; I love Jesus, and I know that he loves me!"

Another spasm ensued, and she was in great anguish. The other children had been introduced at her request, that she might see them, but they were withdrawn, as the room became overheated. Her mother's grief, which she laboured to conceal, compelled her to retire for a few minutes. When she again appeared, the sweet child said—"Come near me, my dear mama, till I tell you how much I love Jesus. Yes," she said, in an under tone, when her mother sat down beside her, "yes, I love Him!"

When she had recovered breath partially, she said, "I should like to see the rest—perhaps I could say something to them."

The children were accordingly brought in. When they were all arranged near her, she said to them, with a tone and manner full of affection and pathos, "Children, I am going to die, and I am not afraid to die; for I know that Jesus loves me, and I love him. O! see that you be good children, and love him too."

The terrors of death had often been the subject of conversation with them in days of health, when he was contemplated at a great distance; and the power of Christ to take away his sting, so that believers should be kept in safety in the last struggle, they had also often heard of; and in the testimony which she now bore to the faithfulness of the Saviour, and to her freedom from fear through his grace, she had reference to all that they had once heard upon the subject, and thus she desired to "set to her seal that God is true."

The doctor after this expressed a desire that the children should be removed. As they were retiring from the room, she called back the youngest of her sisters who had been present, and, as if she feared her first address had not been comprehended, she repeated it, saying"Maggy, I am going to die—and they will put me in a big black hole; but I am not afraid, for I love Jesus; and see you that you will love him too. Remember your Catechism." She had not yet learned to read the Scriptures.

She then said to them all, as they lingered about the door and wept, "Don't cry for me—farewell."

The servants on this came into the room, when she addressed them much in the same strain, informing them that she was dying; that she had no fear; and that her confidence arose from depending upon Christ alone. One of them who, she knew, did not understand English, she addressed in Gaelic, solemnly warning and entreating her and all of them to go to Christ.

When they had quitted the room, her mother asked, "What shall I say to your dear papa from you when he comes home?"

After a short pause, during which she was much affected, she replied with great tenderness of manner, "You will tell him that I think I am united to Christ; that I love Jesus, and know he loves me."

"Will I give him your love?" "O yes," was the reply. She then said, "Mama, I am not sorry to leave the world, but I am sorry to leave

you all;" on uttering which her heart seemed bursting. The last, the only tie, which bound her to earth was being broken. The enemy could not destroy her; but this one opportunity more was left to inflict a passing wound ere she entered into endless joy. The wound was given, but it was as quickly cured. Her "Friend" was at hand, and peace could not be distant.

"You remember, my dear," her mother said,
"the chapter I read you lately, about Christ's second coming, and how we shall all meet then?"

She was instantly comforted, and her countenance brightened,—" O yes," she answered, "we shall all meet again."

A dreadful spasm immediately ensued. "Oh!" she cried, after a short interval, "I am in great pain—how I desire that He would come and take me to himself!"

After a few moments' silence she made a sign with her finger, saying, "Doctor!" as if wishing to speak to him. On his approaching, she could only add, "Speech—less;" and without a single throe breathed her last; her redeemed soul quitting its frail tabernacle, and entering into the joy of its Lord. Her mother laid her hand on her eyes, and they were closed on this world for ever!

The foregoing notes of Matilda's conversations

are given strictly, as far as possible, in her own words; but they constitute no more than specimens of the topics on which she expatiated—of her views of divine truth, and her experience as a follower of the Lamb. They are a mother's imperfect recollections of what passed when death was not thought to be in the cup, associated with anticipations which then prevailed, or were cherished in opposition to secret forebodings, of future days of sanctified delight in the newly discovered tie which she felt uniting their hearts, as together "bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord." But however imperfect, they testify, in language sufficiently distinct, to the power of divine grace: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

In its simplest view, the saving work of the Spirit consists in convincing of sin, and leading the soul, under this operation, to an implicit and exclusive reliance upon Christ for salvation. There is a clear perception of the evil lamented, and also the humiliation which this must ever induce, connected with a most hearty concurrence in God's appointed way of deliverance—a joyful acceptance of the truth that reveals it—and a stedfast regarding of the object of faith, Christ, for all that the soul requires. Be the course of the

believer long or short, in passing through this wilderness, such is his experience in the beginning and to the end of his pilgrimage, embracing continued discoveries of his own unworthiness on the one hand, and of the mercy of God in Christ on the other, his life being a life of faith in Him " who loved him and gave himself for him." And be he young or old, under the influence of this knowledge of himself as a sinner, and of God as his Saviour, sin is crucified, and spiritual graces grow and abound; he lives to Christ, and he dies in the Lord. Judging by this rule, we believe our dear child was born of the Spirit, and that she now inherits the promises. A sense of sin humbled her in the dust; but a knowledge of Christ produced the lively hope which belongs only to them that are his. She lived, yet not she, but Christ lived in her.

To what but to the effectual and saving operations of the Eternal Spirit can be ascribed the graces which she exhibited—the peace, patience, love, joy, longings for conformity to the will of God, and for separation from the world in heart and in practice? The carnal mind, which is enmity against Him, never was adorned with fruit like this. And to what shall we ascribe the victory over death vouchsafed to her? Never, in

any sick-room did his presence cause less dismay, though he came, too, at a time that we thought It was not that his terrors were veiled. for the address to her little sister showed that the noisomeness of the grave was before the eyes of the youthful sufferer-" to corruption," she said, "Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister." It was not that by powers of reasoning or philosophic inductions, she had quelled the tumult of nature, shrinking from the fearful contest—such defensive armour she had none. Neither did the insensibility of delirium conduct her, as in a troubled dream, beyond the precincts of life; for never was even the victim of a violent end more vividly conscious. until the infliction of the fatal stroke, than she. It was not boldness of character causing her to repel fear, for she was constitutionally timid; nor ignorance, to rest as a thick cloud on the world of spirits, concealing the tribunal at which she was about to appear, for, versed in the letter of the Scriptures, she knew the "terror of the Lord." Nor, finally, was it consciousness of innocence, or reflections on a well-spent life, operating as a deceitful opiate, for her convictions were all of sin. How, then, came death to be despoiled of his terrors? Purely through faith, which is of grace, sovereign and efficacious—faith in Him who hath taken away the sting of the last enemy for his redeemed, and who can give not only protection from his power, but deliverance also from his fear. As a little child, she had received the kingdom of God; and He who carries the lambs in his bosom, exalted her above the darkness and alarm that have many a time surrounded the death-bed of aged Christians, and conveyed her thus, in perfect peace, to those mansions where are the "small and great," and where the song of Moses and of the Lamb is for ever sung.

Had she been spared in the world, she would, doubtless, have been exposed to many temptations. She would have heard, and read, and seen what might bewilder, perplex, or mislead. Her musical talent, remarkable in one of her age, might have proved a snare. Under evil influences she might again and again have been turned aside; and painful experiences, even falls with bruises and wounds, might have been connected with restorations to the simplicity of faith and to joy in the Lord. Preserved by Him who had called her, the journey would have been safe, however beset with trials and sorrows, and all must have been well at last; but who can say

that her life would have so testified to the sovereignty as well as to the power of divine grace, or that her departure would have been so triumphant? It pleased the Lord to bring her by a near path across the barren desert, and to carry her, as upon eagles' wings, over the swellings of Jordan—" for his is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory."

During my short absence, I had received regular intimations of Matilda's state of health. The accounts were all favourable, but not such as to dispel anxiety. Earnestly longing to be restored to my place by her sick-bed, I left Glasgow, on my way home, late on the Monday evening, after the services of the thanksgiving day. My route was circuitous, as I intended to pass a single day with a dear brother, who had been recently visited by the heaviest of all domestic afflictions. This accomplished, I proceeded on my journey. Within two days' travel of home, viz., on the Friday, I received a letter which had been written there on Monday. It was not so favourable as former ones; but had not my mind already begun to be filled with evil forebodings, it could not have excited great alarm.

Whoever is acquainted with the tumult of a Highland steam-boat, during a dark and boisterous night, will be able to judge how ill suited to my state of mind were the circumstances by which I was surrounded; but even in such as those, the soul may have communion with Him whose presence can give peace, and "keep the heart and mind." I looked eagerly for the morning; for I expected, soon after its arrival, to be landed at a point little more than forty miles from my home, and calculated that, by the good hand of God upon me, I should ere the day terminated, find myself again in the midst of my family. My anticipations of the tidings which the conveyance, by which I was to travel, might bring me were various: but once only did a fear pass across my mind that I should not find Matilda alive, and the suggestion was banished as an unwarranted intrusion. Long before we reached the shore, my eye had sought the conveyance which I expected to be in waiting; and at last I discovered it in charge of a pious schoolmaster from our parish. His presence startled me, but I explained the circumstance to myself, by recollecting that our servant must have been busily occupied with the spring labour; yet the explanation was not satisfactory. I leapt ashore, and ran up to him. "How is all at home?" was my anxious inquiry. "Well," was the answer,

and I was presented with a letter superscribed by my dear wife. It was sealed with black, but so were all the others I had received from her since my departure, for we were in mourning for my brother's wife. "How is Matilda?" There was hesitation, and a look which did not relieve me —still I expected to hear no more than that she was beyond hope of recovery; but the answer came at last—"She is dead!"

Why should I obtrude on the reader the anguish of that moment, and the heavy grief of that tedious day? After more than thirteen years of uninterrupted domestic prosperity, death had at length entered our dwelling, and I was now returning to a sorrowing family, to whom I had never before returned but joyful to them rejoicing. But I was in some measure made to hear the voice-" Be still and know that I am God." and enabled to respond-"What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" It was late when I arrived at the manse; and I entered my wife's apartment ere she knew I had come. Friends who were present retired, and we were left alone to mingle our tears in all the consciousness of "bitterness for a first-born." The grace vouchsafed my beloved partner had been wonderful; and she had youth and advanced attainments—the health—the sprightly vivacity—the happy disposition for which she had been distinguished, I could only exclaim—"What hath sin wrought!" "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!"





## CHAPTER III.

"And Thou my fainting soul with strength Didst strengthen inwardly."

The state of the other children excited no apprehension in our minds. The older ones appeared almost recovered from the effects of the epidemic; and as we looked for the speedy approach of warm weather, which would enable us to remove them for the benefit of change of air, no alarm possessed us on their account. They were confined to the house, indeed, the severity of the season being remarkable; but this was their only restriction. Our youngest, Jessie, just two years old, was evidently the most weakly; but she was not confined to bed. Her case appeared in some points to resemble Matilda's; yet, as she had none of the spasmodic affection which we associated with the fatal termination of her sixter's

ailment, and little of her weakness—moreover, as she every day was carried about in the nurse's arms, and often displayed the cheerfulness of health, no one conceived her to be in danger. The medical attendant, too, had ceased his visits, being equally at ease with ourselves. That her convalescence was less advanced than the others, we ascribed to her aversion to medicine, and her resistance, only occasionally overcome, to the necessary remedies for the removal of the fever which still hung about her.

On Friday of the week on which we had committed Matilda to kindred dust, Jessie appeared greatly improved. We were encouraged in our cheerful anticipations, and our minds were at rest, so far as they could be under our recent wound. We still had six sweet children; and though we mourned her departure who had been so bright a pattern to them that remained, we knew that God had taken her:—she had gone to Christ, which was "far better" than to be with us.

On Saturday morning it was thought that an unfavourable change was perceptible in our little darling; not so marked, however, as much to increase our anxiety for her. It was natural that we should now be easily alarmed; and our fears, in so far as they existed, were ascribed to this.

Such means, however, as were thought advisable under circumstances, were employed, and we hoped that towards evening their good effects would be evident.

During the forenoon I was busily employed in my study. Soon after mid-day, my wife came to me and said, that Jessie did not seem to improve. She was anxious, but did not fear danger, and I encouraged her as I best could. About two o'clock, I was called to the nursery to see our sweet patient, for she seemed to get worse. Then, indeed, I perceived an alteration which justified, as I feared, more than the anxiety I had endeavoured to allay. She was in the nurse's arms as usual, but appeared much oppressed, and evidently was in great pain. I did not think that any of those about her had perceived her danger; but the suffering they had seen Matilda endure, and which I had not, diminished their alarm for the attack. We soon began to dread that the powers of life were sinking: a warm bath was instantly prepared. Her illness increased rapidly -a little wine and water was administered; but we soon too clearly saw that the hand of death was on our tender infant. We were not prepared for this shock; but "the Hope of Israel-the Saviour thereof in the day of trouble," did not

formke us. To Him she had been devoted by us ever since He gave her being; and we now kneeled down, and together called on His holy name in her behalf. Soul and body were commended to Him in the everlasting covenant, and Christ with all his benefits accepted by us, as her parents, for her. The moment was one of deep emotion and awful solemnity. We felt the presence and, in this providence, heard the voice of Him who "openeth and no man shutteth," and in whose hands alone are "the keys of hell and of death." How striking is his sovereignty, and tain as well as sinful were opposition to his will; "for He giveth not account of any of his matters." We arose from our knees, and in a few moments. after a brief struggle with the last enemy, the spirit of this gentle child had returned to God who gave it.

This new blow, so unexpectedly and at so short an interval succeeding our other bereavement, was felt as a sore affliction: "The clouds had returned after the rain." We had watched for the morning, and believed its dawn had broke; but the shades of night had come again. and they seemed to brood on us more deeply than ever. Yet, amidst the darkness, the word of God shone like the pillar of fire in sight of the camp of

Israel. How precious was the experience of His people in every age, recorded there, and presented to the eye of faith! How suited to us was the history of patient Job—the repeated infliction of evil in such rapid succession, the answer made to every unbelieving suggestion, whether from within or from without, the manifestation of human weakness on the one hand, with that of divine grace, forbearance, and power, on the other; -and "the end of the Lord" in all the providence! Hard thoughts were suppressed and silenced; and amidst our sorrow we were soothed and invigorated by the consideration, that the same mercy which upheld him now sustained us, and that in our great weakness the strength of the Lord should be more signally perfected.

The cheering circumstances of Matilda's end were wanting in that of our youngest child; but believing her to be in the covenant, as the offspring of parents who professed to have sought Christ for themselves and their children, we looked upon her as taken away from the evil to come, and as called thus speedily to join her glorified sister in the realms of bliss! Did we wish them back again? Ah, no! we could not; but we entered into David's experience, when "he arose from the earth, and washed and anointed him-

self, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped," saying of his departed child, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Our recollections of the gentle infant thus removed from us, were all soothing and pleasant. She had just begun, with her artless prattle, to delight her mother's heart, and she was the object of the constant caresses of her brothers and It was grateful to our feelings to recall her stillness and solemnity of manner at worship, and the regularity with which she, evening and morning, kneeled down to lisp her infant prayers. Her natural timidity and tenderness of feeling seemed to us now to have foretold that she was not for the storms of the world, and we could not mourn when we thought that she would never encounter them. Matilda's death seemed to open up a train of thought, if we may so speak of one of such tender age, to which she had before been a stranger. If she had heard of death, certainly no idea had been associated with the term; no suspicion existed in her mind of the evil which it expressed. She and her younger brother seemed amazed at the sorrow that pervaded the family, but they could not partake of it. It seemed to surprise her especially, that Matilda was not now

attended as she used to be; and she constantly urged the nurse to carry her to the room where she lay, and there never tired to look in the face of the dead. We were much affected with this in all the children. They seldom remained long away from the chamber of death; they would themselves remove the cloth from their sister's face, and gaze in solemn attitude, recalling the words she had spoken to them, and all their happy intercourse together. "Poor Tildy!" Jessie used to say, "Poor Tildy-not well-Tildy sleep-soon well-poor Tildy!" Her only impression seemed to be, that death was a long sleep, and she every day expected, as we thought, that Matilda was to awake, and be to her what she had wont to be. And is not death a blessed sleep to the child of God, and will not such as "sleep in Jesus" have a glorious awakening? "Sin reigned" in this sweet infant "unto death;" but were we not warranted to believe that "grace also reigned" in her "through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord?" we err in following her too, with the eye of faith, into His presence, who had seemed to say to us, "Suffer these little children to come unto me, and forbid them not?"

On Saturday, the 21st April, Jessie died. Next

day I preached from Rev. vii. 13-15. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." On the preceding Sabbath I had not preached—a valued friend supplied my place—and I now endeavoured to improve the afflictive dispensations in our family to a sympathizing and deeply affected congregation.

On the 25th she was interred, being laid on Matilda's left hand, the coffins touching each other, both being mantled by the same turf!

But our trial was not yet past. The Lord still sat as a refiner, and the furnace had not hitherto been heated as it was His sovereign and gracious will it should be. We had already lost our youngest as well as our oldest, and again we were about to be called upon to part with a youngest, also in the tender years of infancy.

Christian parents have consolations of a peculiar kind, in the death of their infant offspring. They are in the covenant with themselves, and have been, in secret, and before men, solemnly

dedicated to their Father in heaven. Christ is thus their Head and Saviour. "Of such," he declared, "is the kingdom of heaven." Commenting on this passage, Mr Scott remarks, "The expression may also intimate, that the kingdom of heavenly glory is greatly constituted of such as die in their infancy. Infants are as capable of regeneration as grown persons; and there is ground to conclude, that all those who have not lived to commit actual transgressions, though they have shared in the effects of the first Adam's offence, will also share in the blessings of the second Adam's gracious covenant—without their personal faith and obedience, but not without the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ. Whilst we teach our children, as they become capable of learning, how ready the condescending Son of God is to answer their lisping petitions, and to accept of them as his disciples; we may be well satisfied that he has taken to his heavenly kingdom such of them as have died in infancy; for, doubtless, the covenant is made with the believer for the good of this part of his offspring in an especial manner. If, then, Christian parents have their beloved branches cropt in the bud, they cannot, surely, have cause to complain, or to think much of their pain, care, or trouble, when they are made the instruments of God in raising up children to him, who may inherit his everlasting kingdom."

The ordinance of baptism, of which such children have been partakers, speaks comfort Previous to its administration, indeed, they are included, by virtue of the parents' faith, in the visible Church of Christ, as being in covenant with him; but baptism, which publicly declares that they are so, and which is then the sign of promised blessings, is, in the hour of death, contemplated as the seal, or assurance on God's part, that he will accomplish, in their experience, all that he has promised. Their safety is not left as a doubtful thing. The great covenant is, in this solemn ordinance, unfolded; it is opened up more fully than many kings and wise men saw it, for the reception of a Christian's child. That child. though an infant of days, is baptized with the same solemn formula as an apostle; and the Triune God of salvation reveals himself in his glory to build the walls of Zion-to inset the little stones as well as the great; a solemn attestation to the value of the child, and an assurance that its safety is fully provided for.

May not Christian parents come short in privilege, by failing to plead with sufficient earnest-

ness the benefits of this ordinance in behalf of their children, whilst they are spared to them; and may they not come short in duty, by failing to appeal to it when they address them on spiritual and eternal things? What an appeal had those parents who brought their tender little ones to Christ, to that event, in after years, in dealing with them! How forcibly might they relate to them the solemn circumstances of that affecting occasion; their rejection by the disciples, and Christ's displeasure on this account; his condescension and tender kindness; his taking them up in his arms, putting his hands upon them, and blessing them! How might they speak of the assurance thus afforded that He would redeem the pledge of favour given them --- of the encouragement to pray to him, to rely on his grace, to trust his providence, to wait his coming! If He regarded them with such tenderness on earth, must not His intercessions on their behalf be sure in heaven-in health, under the pressure of affliction, and amidst the agonies of death! And how irresistible the claim on those favoured children, to fear the name, to love the law, and to seek the glory of that gracious and divine Saviour-that holy, that good man, who had bestowed so precious a benediction when they knew it not! It

they had been distinguished by such a privilege -if they had been in His arms who now was "made higher than the heavens," being the object of adoration to the glorious hosts which surround the throne, did not this constitute an obligation not to be resisted, constraining them to be distinguished by every holy qualification, and every heavenly grace! But have not Christian parents, now, a similar appeal to baptism, in dealing with their offspring, who, in that solemn ordinance, have been surrendered to the same gracious Redeemer, whose Word still testifies to all his people, "The promise is unto you, and unto your children." Let this sacrament, then. be duly exalted; not only as a source of comfort when disease wastes and death snatches their iewels away from them, but as a means of exhortation, instruction, and encouragement, while they are left under their charge. They were brought to Christ to be blessed, in the way ordained by himself; and have they not been blessed? The thrice holy name of God has been named on them-the sign of his grace administered by his ordained servant; why, then, should they be aliens or enemies; why serve any strange god, or why seek joy elsewhere than in the wells of salvation?

Our youngest boy, Alexander, had just passed his fourth birth-day. For his years, he was a child of uncommon strength and vigour. appearance was highly prepossessing; and his generous disposition and vivacity made him a universal favourite. Strangers will naturally be jealous of a parent's description; but such as knew him will not deny that he was a lovely and an engaging child. His robust constitution had resisted the effects of hooping-cough, so that he suffered little from it. The subsequent fever lay long upon him; for his natural liveliness made restraint of any kind so intolerable, that he could with great difficulty be induced to submit to the necessary confinement. He had, however, but for weakness, nearly recovered his usual health.

On the day on which Matilda's coffin was brought to the manse, when I went to the door to meet the tradesmen, I found Alick standing there. The weather was piercingly cold, with sleet and high wind. He had escaped unobserved from the nursery, and, with childish curiosity, was gazing on an object which to him was new. The consequence dreaded ensued—he had caught a slight cold, and next day suffered a relapse of the fever. He was confined to bed, and we hoped that, under the simple remedies

employed, this new indisposition would soon disappear.

When poor Jessie expired, he was a deeply interested witness of all that passed on that affecting occasion. Our attention was so exclusively and intensely occupied with her case, that we wholly overlooked the circumstance of poor Alick's presence. When my eye caught him, after all was over, he was resting on his elbow, having raised himself in bed to observe more distinctly what was going forward. Never shall I forget the expression of his intelligent countenance when his eye caught mine. It was as if he wished me to be comforted, and to comfort him, by giving assurance that no evil had occurred, and that no new sorrow had come upon us. Alas! dear boy, little did we think that his own days had drawn to so narrow a span, and that he should so soon follow his darling sister, the sharer of his joys, and often his comforter in many a little sorrow!

On observing our mistake, in having permitted nim to witness Jessie's decease, we had him wrapped in blankets, and carried to a warm and wellseasoned room in another part of the house. For a day or two no apprehension was entertained for him; but then, as he did not decidedly improve, medical advice was called to our aid. The opinion of both the gentlemen who visited him was favourable-they thought the ailment slight; and so should we, in ordinary circumstances, have thought; but our past sad experience utterly forbade our being at ease in witnessing the symptoms manifested. These were such as to produce a fear of water in the head: and we trembled to think of the sufferings, to him and to us, which must ensue. Although the medical gentlemen did not willingly admit their fears of this dreadful complaint, we thought we could perceive it was from compassion to us. Their prescriptions, when we afterwards reflected on their character. showed their apprehensions; but, at the time, we were too anxious to listen to any opinion which contradicted our impressions, and afforded, if not rest, at least temporary respite, to our aching hearts.

At no period of our trial were we more impressed, than now, with the truth that the Lord's compassion is that of a father for his children. A new affliction was to come. Our good, His glory required it; but it came not so as to overwhelm. Step by step we were let down to the depths of this sorrow; and although, in course of the ten days during which we watched and prayed.

by our dying boy, the furnace appeared as if seven times heated, yet then, more than at any other period of our suffering, did we feel most sensibly His presence and faithfulness who has said, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee;" the interpositions of His providence, the supplies of His grace, and the consolations of His Spirit. "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy."

The remarks which I have ventured to introduce in the beginning of this narrative were now, as at other seasons of our affliction, strongly suggested, viz., the possibility that true religion may exist in the soul of a child, whilst his natural vivacity and very childishness conceal it from the view of human eye, until disease comes, and the flow of animal spirits, subsiding under its influence, gives opportunity to the latent grace to ap-Poor Alick had not yet learnt to read: but from the very dawn of intellect, he would listen with earnest and attentive ear to those parts of Scripture which he could understand when read to him; and a "pretty story from the Bible" had always charms for which play and every thing else would at any time be abandoned. It was a bribe which secured quiet on all occasions, and

the attraction which drew him particularly to his elder brother, and knit his heart to his.

More than a year before the period of Alick's illness, a little incident occurred in the nursery, which, as it produced a strong sensation there, and deeply affected him, may be related. soon after the recovery from measles, already alluded to. One night, a sister, about double his age then, was observed to be pensive and much dejected. She was asked what was wrong. Her answer was, "Can you tell me what a soul is?" Her oldest brother began to explain that it is not the body, although residing in it—that when the body dies the soul continues to live-and that the souls of good people go to heaven, but those of the wicked to hell. She became much agitated, and cried, "Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? I told a lie, and my soul must go to hell!" As she was in real distress of mind, and wept bitterly, the attention of all the children was attracted to her, and to the subject under discussion. The offence to which she alluded had occurred more than a year before. She had by accident burnt her pinafore, and on being charged with it, denied the fact. When the truth was discovered she was brought to me, and in warning her of the nature of her offence, I quoted

some of the passages of Scripture which speak of the doom of "liars." Her brother endeavoured to appease her, by telling of pardon by the blood of Christ, and assuring her, that if she asked she would obtain forgiveness. Next morning the incident was related to mama; and as the child's distress continued, she spoke to her on the subject. She confirmed what her brother had stated; but added, that pardon was not all that was required. She must ask and receive a new heart and right spirit, which Christ was as willing to give as the pardon of sin. "But, mama, I do not know how to pray for it-will you teach me?" She fell on her knees, and having gone through her usual prayer, raised her eyes earnestly to her mother, saying, "Tell me now, mama," This was accordingly done in a few plain words; and both during the continuance of this impression, which lasted long, and since, they have been in constant use. The other children were solemnly affected—and none more than dear Alick. Never thereafter did he lay his head on his pillow, or arise from sleep, without lisping, "O Lord, create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me; take away this hard and stony heart, and give me a heart to love and serve thee. for Christ's sake;" preceded by the simple lines.

"This night I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."—Or,

"The Lord hath kept me through the night, And brought me to the morning light; O, may He keep me all this day, And make me walk in his good way."

Subsequently to Jessie's death, a very marked change was apparent in his whole manner and conduct. He had formerly disliked to be spoken to of death. "Alick not going to die; Alick soon well," he used to say, when his liability to death and the necessity of preparation were set before his mind. He now seemed much occupied with the subject, and no such aversion was manifested when it was introduced. Every medical prescription was cheerfully submitted to, and the most nauseous draughts were swallowed without a murmur. Whilst it was gratifying to mark this change in his disposition, we were cheered by the hope, that the final result might yet be favourable. His natural liveliness, which continued, contributed likewise to deceive us; and although none of the alarming symptoms gave way, we ceased not to expect the natural benefit of the full employment of the suitable means. We were ready to accept as a token for good, his willing submission to medical prescriptions, and we looked hopefully for the blessing which could make them effectual.

In the beginning of his illness, the aching of his head, which, however, was but occasional, seemed the chief suffering. "Sore, sore," he would say, laying his little hand on his burning brow. This, by-and-by, seemed to cease, and then, when asked what pained him, "Oh! me so tired, papa, so vely tired," was the answer which always wrung our hearts, unable as we were to minister any relief; until at length he became unconscious, as we hoped and believed, of all the pain and misery wherewith he was afflicted.

The coma or stupor, symptomatic of this direful complaint, did not make its decided appearance until the last week of his life; but for eight days before he expired, he had not above one, or at most two, short intervals of consciousness. Previous to these days, he often asked his mother to read "pretty story from the Bible," and would listen with a pleased and happy temper to all that was said to him on spiritual matters. Again and again did he request to hear about the "little boy who had sore head," as he expressed it—the Shunammite's son, the mercy shown to whom

seemed to fill his mind and to delight his heart. He dwelt on the thought that "God had made him well;" and in his own affliction, we believe, he looked to the same source—his hope and expectation—as a child might do.

It is difficult to say how small a portion of the living seed sown in a child's soul the Eternal Spirit may render effectual, and to what degree He may sanctify such afflictions as our dear boy experienced. To us it was, indeed, consolatory to see his eye turned towards "the light shining in a dark place;" to the Word of God; to all the truths extracted therefrom, which, in various shapes, he had committed to memory; and to perceive also the peace and patience vouchsafed whilst the heavy hand of approaching dissolution was laid upon him. In the heart of a child so young, there could, in such circumstances, be none of the guile of the world; but if truth reigned in his feeble efforts to embrace the Saviour-that Saviour who rebuked his disciples when they forbade such to be brought to Him-must we not believe that it was heaven-born and accepted?

"If babes so many years ago
His tender pity drew,
He will not surely let me go
Without a blessing too."

The first indication of approaching lethargy appeared on Tuesday, the 1st of May; and although from this day forth it gained upon the gentle sufferer, all communication with his mind did not cease until the beginning of the succeeding week. Even then, though it was the last of his short earthly career, once or twice he revived, so as to address us in words of intelligence and comfort. We needed comfort; for the recollection of our past bereavements began to fade before the anticipation of another clad in terrors which they had not had.

It is difficult for those who enjoy the constant and ready benefit of medical aid to judge of the distraction of mind which the want of this privilege, in such cases as ours, produces. Material injury may be the result of acting or of refraining from action, and in either case the reproach of mind thereafter is painful beyond description. That in a parish of at least twenty miles square, there should not be even one resident practitioner, may surprise some not acquainted with such a state of things; yet, in the Highlands, it is no uncommon occurrence. Daily visits, therefore, are out of the question; and in a wide country where many calls arise for the services of those useful functionaries, thinly scattered over its sur-

face as they are, days may pass, when they are sent for, ere their presence can be obtained. On more than one occasion, during our dear boy's illness, we were deeply affected by the providential circumstances which placed within our easy reach, in the hour of greatest need, the gentleman who had charge of his case. We were made to feel that "God, who comforteth those who are cast down," had sent him, if not to cure our child, at least to soothe for a time our disturbed spirits. Because we recognised in those occurrences His doing, they were at once wonderful and precious in our eyes.

We could enter fully into the "nobleman's" experience, when, with thrilling importunity, he said, "Sir, come down ere my child die!" These words became common in our lips, addressed to the great physician, who, when they were first spoken, heard and answered. And did He not hear and regard the same appeal now? Yes. What he said to the "nobleman," he said to us—" Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." We were made to remember, that "signs and wonders" ought not to be necessary to the exercise of faith—"Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed"—and though our child should be taken

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from us, a humble assurance was wrought in our minds that our prayer was not "put away," and that the presence of the Son of God, "mighty to save," was vouchsafed us in the furnace.

There are but few additional particulars in the story of this dear infant; for the disease made painful progress, and the prostration of strength was rapid and overwhelming.

"Where Jessie, mama—where Matilda?" he said, on one occasion, soon after the stupor had commenced to exert its influence, as he opened his eyes and looked at us sitting by him.

"They are with Christ in heaven," was the answer.

"Heaven vely pretty place, mama?"

"Yes. Would you like, Alick, to be with Jessie and Matilda in that pretty place?"

"Yes, me like vely much; but," seeing our tears, he added, "Me rather stay here, and me be good boy and always say me prayers."

He then asked his mother to read to him, and whilst she was engaged in this, the sleep from which he had just awakened regained possession of him.

Once more only did he, after this, so far recover as to converse distinctly with us, and it was but for a little moment. He awoke from the stupor, and looking at us, as we were about to give him something, said, with a sweet smile, as if some vision had just been passing before his eyes—

"Me know place where two pretty lasses pretty, pretty place."

"Christ has taken them there," we said, "and he is coming to take Alick to be with them."

He looked at us as if he understood what we meant; his eyes grew heavy, and in a little he was lost in sleep, which nothing could break.

Before the lethargy had exerted its full influence over him, and when he had become so feeble that he could no longer place himself upon his knees, evening and morning he was heard whispering his infant supplications as he lay in helpless exhaustion on his uneasy bed. At last, when his mind became enshrouded in increased darkness, he seemed incapable of retaining the ideas, and forgot even the words so often used by him, and in this painful state he would say to us, with a melancholy tone, "Tell me me prayers—not know what say," and would repeat after us as we directed him.

During the last week, as already stated, he was lost to us. More than once he seemed just about to sink under his heavy load of suffering, and we besought the Lord for him, as one at the point The recoveries on these occasions apof death. peared very singular. After his features became fixed, and the pulse ceased to be perceptible, except at intervals, when even sinapisms applied to the soles of his feet failed to stimulate the circulation, the indefatigable exertions of his medical attendant, in the use of various cordials, would be blessed, and the darling patient would revive so as to breathe freely, and appear in a composed slumber. Thus the taper of life, ere it went out, threw up its fitful gleams; and thus the Hearer of prayer animated and encouraged our persevering supplications, whilst he gave opportunity to continue in them. How earnestly did we plead that He, with whom nothing is impossible, might prolong his days, and spare us the pang of a third separation after so short an interval; but with what equal earnestness did we ask that our child might be numbered with the redeemed-those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and in whom his Spirit dwells! And did we err in believing the secret support vouchsafed in our trying hour to be the earnest of God's accepting our prayers, and of his willingness to exceed abundantly all our desires and thoughts?

His sufferings towards the close became dread-

ful. On Saturday the 12th, we more than once conceived that he was expiring, and we kneeled by his bed under this impression-accepting Christ for him, devoting him to the Lord, pleading that, in the furnace into which he was cast, the dross of sin might be purged away, and his redeemed soul prepared for the heavenly inheritance, and humbly imploring, too, that his sufferings might be diminished. In the night he appeared much relieved, and on Sabbath he still survived, though it was evident the hand of death pressed heavily on him. Towards afternoon symptoms of convulsions appeared: they increased. Oh, what a sight is the approach of the "last enemy," thus exerting his power! and what consolation to be able to think that our helpless child, though the victim of that power, was unconscious of it! The struggle was long-all that human art and ceaseless attention could do to alleviate the agony of this dark hour was done. It ceased at last, and a little past midnight our lovely boy, heaving three deep sighs, yielded up his spirit into the hands of its faithful Creator!

How dear this child was to us our heavenly Father knows; and how deep, therefore, the wound was inflicted by his untimely end. Yet we enjoyed a soothing persuasion, that his disem-

bodied soul had joined his beloved sisters before the throne, where the pang of no separation will ever overtake them. We reflected on his infantile age-on the humbling and apparently gracious effects, through the power of God, which the affliction he had witnessed produced—on the evident employment of instruction, imparted in days of health, for separating his affections from the world and raising his thoughts to heaven. Above all, we reflected, with gratitude and humble confidence, on the spirit of supplication which we so remarkably felt poured on ourselves during all the term of his illness, protracted as it was beyond our expectations; and which we knew to be poured not on us alone, but on others also in his behalf. As each of our dear children had been called away, we published the event, saying, "Perhaps some Christian friend may be induced to pray for us." And during the closing scene of Alick's life, when sympathy was strongly awakened, our hope in this was strikingly realized. Pious friends, near and at a distance, as several have since informed me, were moved to pray for us, and especially for our dying boy. We reflected, that if the Lord gave this spirit of supplication at such a time—if he enabled ourselves to take hold on his strength, and raised up others

to plead for us, it was that, when thus "inquired of," he might do the thing we asked. For "this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

On the 17th of May, exactly one month from the date of dear Matilda's funeral, the mortal remains of our beloved Alexander were laid in the grave. He was placed on her right hand, his coffin touching her's on that side as Jessie's did on the left.

"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass."





## CHAPTER IV.

"Those that are broken in their heart, And grieved in their minds, He healeth, and their painful wounds He tenderly upbinds."

But the story of our sufferings ends not here; for our cup of sorrow was not yet full. And when I trace these words and look back, I feel amazed how nature supported the accumulated load of affliction wherewith it pleased God to visit us. Nature, did I say? Alas! long ere this, it had been overwhelmed, but for that grace which was vouchsafed, and to the power of which we were such striking witnesses. "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits."

"Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all—
This is happiness to me."

Our second daughter, Ann, had just passed

her ninth birth-day. She was one of those rare and happy beings who make friends of all who know them. Her natural temper and disposition were particularly amiable; and, pleased and contented with everything herself, she never harboured a suspicion of a contrary feeling in the mind of others. Like her sister, she had been apt to learn; and, besides having her mind stored with the truths of Scripture, and many psalms and hymns, she, too, had made considerable progress in secular education.

She had suffered little from hooping-cough and the subsequent fever, and, until near the close of Alick's illness, was considered quite recovered. Some days before his death she complained of pain in her side, but a sinapism and some simple medicine removed it, and she was again quite well. The fluctuation of feeling, of hope and fear, which agitated us with regard to Alick, was not communicated to the other children; for it was evident, that they all began to tremble as if they were set apart to death, and to feel as if one after the other was to be smitten down. We sought to cheer them, and to support their minds, as we best could, by referring to His grace and mercy in whose hands their life was; but at length it became impossible for us to conceal our own dejection and uneasiness about their dear brother.

On one of the days towards the end of Alick's last week, Ann came to her mother and said, "How is poor Alick to-day?" She was tenderly attached to him, and from the beginning of his attack evinced the deepest interest in his fate. Her mother's answer was not encouraging; on which she added, with an expression of the deepest anxiety, "Surely Alick is not going to die, mama?" Her mother's look told but too truly her fears; and though she said much to soothe her under her evident distress, the shock to her feelings was a severe one. Immediately thereafter, as she told us subsequently, she felt a sudden pain dart through her head, which never forsook her.

That evening it was thought advisable to apply leeches to her forehead. Next day, though she got out of bed, and manifested her usual cheerful equanimity, the leeching was repeated, and other means employed, with apparently good effect; but on Sunday it was necessary to confine her to bed, and blistering on the back of the head was added to the other treatment. Nothing of all this would, probably, have been resorted to, but for our past experience, which quickened

our apprehensions, and induced our medical friend to anticipate danger by decided measures. It is gratifying now to think that we were thus directed in Providence, and that what man could do was done for our beloved child.

On Sabbath afternoon our eldest boy was sent to sit with poor Ann in her room, whilst the family partook of a hasty meal. When dinner was past and all had retired, or returned to their duty by the sick-beds, he came in and sat down by me, with an expression of face which told that he had something to communicate. I asked him whether he had had any conversation with his sister on serious matters. He answered that he had been conversing with her, and that she was under great concern for her soul. She had been desirous to unburden her mind to her mother when reading the Scriptures to her in the morning, but had been prevented from several causes. and she now felt great anxiety that we should both come to her apartment, and give her an opportunity of speaking to us. Alick still survived, though life was ebbing fast—he filled our thoughts, and Ann's case had not yet excited any alarm. This message, however, brought us quickly to her bedside.

We besought her to open her mind freely and

fully, and encouraged her to speak, and conceal nothing. On this she began in a manner, and with an expression the most touching, to confess her exceeding sinfulness. She said that she had been long thoughtless and indifferent about her soul, although she had often felt convictions; and her mind seemed deeply distressed with the recollection, that even on the day of Matikda's funeral, she had been so light-hearted as to be amusing herself with toys. She lamented in strong terms that she had never been doing good in the world, nor glorifying God-the chief end for which she had been created. Her humiliation was very striking; every look and expression showed it; so that after listening long to her declarations of self-abasement, and in various ways searching her views and feeling, I felt within myself a blessed assurance that the law had come home to her soul with divine power.

During the whole of this day, and for two days previous, she had been, as was thought, in a nervous state. She appeared unwilling to be left alone, and grasped convulsively the hand of any one whose charge it was to be with her. I was surprised to be informed of this; for all the children were trained to be alone in the dark, or otherwise, as circumstances required, and they

knew no superstitious fears. It was conscience that had awaked; and, under saving conviction of sin, she had not yet attained to the liberty and love which deliver from bondage and cast out fear. We were much affected with the tenderness manifested by one little trait. She had. it would appear, a long time before, informed against poor Alick in some slight offence of which he had been guilty. As they were warmly attached, he had felt acutely the accusation coming from her, and had wept bitterly under the trial. The incident now recurred to her mind, and, sincerely grieved by the recollection, she asked me, with tears in her eyes, if I thought Alick remembered it? He was dying, and her heart was racked with the thought, that she had ever produced one uneasy feeling in his mind. Both tables of the law were condemning her-she had transgressed against God, and she had not loved her brother as she should have done She now ended the disclosure of her experience by saying, with a tone and expression of countenance which melted my heart, "Oh, papa, do you think Christ will save me?"

Surely here was an opportunity, of no ordinary kind, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation and with what feelings was it embraced! The

large tears were rolling over her face, and her attitude was that of deep attention. I assured her, with the authority of one commissioned to do so, that the Gospel was for her, and for all like her, convinced of sin. Texts with which she was familiar were quoted. The willingness of God to receive her into his spiritual family was set before her from them-the love of Christ for sinners—his faithfulness—he had never refused. never failed any penitent applicant-his being far more anxious to save her than she was to be saved by him-the infinite merit of his great atonement-his all-prevailing intercession, and the certainty that none who came to him should be lost. She seemed, like Lydia, to have her heart opened, and immediately to receive the Gospel with the simplicity and confidence with which a little child, or those made like unto them, only can. The Spirit who had convinced her of sin, appeared to convince her, with equal power, of mercy in Christ; and from that moment forth she had peace in believing. It was remarkable, that the feeling, which had been ascribed to nervousness, never more returned—she was delivered from the deep pit and miry clay-her mind was thoroughly relieved—its load was gone—the darkness had passed—and whilst her conversation indicated increasing spirituality, there was no recurrence of the bondage of fear.

No new information was communicated to our beloved child in what had been spoken. With the peculiar truths of the Gospel she was previously well acquainted; for at our Sabbath evening exercises of proving doctrines from Scripture, the "proofs" adduced by Ann were always nearly equal to those of her eldest sister and brother. The calm which succeeded her previous agitation, arose not, then, from new knowledge communicated to her mind, but it was grace causing her to receive the glorious truths of "the Word," as addressed to herself; it was faith, wrought by the Spirit in her soul, appropriating Christ and his salvation, thereby making her to pass from death to life. How truly, then, does the Lord, in the experience, and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, perfect praise! The great exercise, and difficult work of faith, is to see sin and Christ at the same time,—to be penetrated with a lively sense of our demerit, and absolute freedom from condemnation. The more we know of both. the nearer approach we make to heaven; and here we behold, in a measure, this free gift of God bestowed, in sovereign grace, upon a little child.

"Papa," she said, after a short interval, "I know that I shall never rise from this bed. I have no desire to return to the world, to be exposed to its sins and temptations; indeed I am not sorry to leave it."

No one then thought her to be in danger. I replied, accordingly, that I hoped she would soon recover, and be spared long; adding, that by usefulness in the world, and by advancing the cause of Christ, she might glorify God and be happy. She assented to this; but said, that now her sorrow to part with us was the only thing which could make her desire to live.

"What is the world!" she exclaimed. "See the changes that have taken place among ourselves—and who would desire to live in it?"

She then expressed strong desire for holiness, and deliverance from sin; entreated us to be praying for her; said she knew we had been doing so; and seemed filled with gratitude that she had parents who could minister to her in spiritual things. Great anxiety was manifested by her that the other children should be concerned for their souls; and she seemed to tremble that any of them should be careless, as she was once.

It is impossible to describe what we felt; we wept—but they were tears of joy. I had not

been permitted to see Matilda on her death-bed; but I was fully persuaded now of what had been told me-that no relation of particulars could convey a correct impression of the holy influence which pervaded the place where she lay. I experienced it now. I felt that I stood upon holy ground-where the Lord was doing wonders amongst us; in wrath remembering mercy, and in midst of the tempest saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid." In the next room our sweet boy was passing away. In his case we would have had "signs and wonders"-an infant to speak as one advanced in knowledge, that our longing desires for his soul might be sensibly satisfied. Though this had been denied. grace was given to believe the goodness of the Lord to him; but if a shade of darkness still lingered around his bed, it now was dispelled. Here there was light which extended thither, and was reflected back on our downcast spirits. We felt that the Lord had heard our importunate supplication, and that to us, as to the nobleman, in faithfulness he said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." A sweet persuasion of his sovereign loving-kindness filled our souls; and it needed not the request of poor Ann, gently made, to cause us to kneel together before Him, and to

pour out our hearts in grateful acknowledgments and earnest petitions for our dying children.

The last hymn which Ann had committed to memory, was that marked 44th in our Church collection of Paraphrases. With the view of calling my attention to its beauties—for it seemed to have made a deep impression on her own mind—she began to read it:

"Behold the Saviour on the cross,
A spectacle of woe!
See from his agonizing wounds
The blood incessant flow."

She stopped, and proposed some striking questions, with reference to the rejection of our Lord by the Jews. The heinousness of their sin, in being guilty of this, appeared to awe her soul; and she wept when speaking of his sufferings at their hands. But the point on which she principally dwelt, was God's long suffering towards those who had so greatly provoked him. Of this she had lately been reading, and her soul was now fed by the truth, that he has not cast off Israel.

"Think, papa, of His infinite mercy," she said, "when, although they have brought such judgments on themselves by their sin, He still pre-

serves them, will yet be their God, and restore them to their own land."

During all the evening, she poured out the feelings of her heart in a strain of highly spiritual conversation. Like Elihu, she was "full of matter; the Spirit within constrained her, and she spoke that she might be refreshed." She reminded me of many things I had said in sermons preached long before, which, she stated, had never left her mind. She spoke of what had affected her in reading the Scriptures, and pious books. She dwelt, with great interest and feeling, on the providence which had detained them all from church for the winter and spring months; and how much that loss had been made up by her mother's exercises with them.

"O papa, if you had been with us, and seen how happy we were; but all that," she added with a sigh, "is past now."

I remarked, that their absence from public ordinances was of God's appointment, not of their own choice, and that I believed he had blessed this dispensation to them, by the effectual teaching of his Spirit; "O yes," she said, "I think so."

When I listened to the child, whom I had always seen so gay, and apparently so thoughtless; whose artless simplicity I had often fancied in-

compatible with clear understanding, or serious feeling, in religious matters, thus manifest a mind well informed, and a heart tenderly affected, how did God seem to say, " My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways;" and what a commentary had we given to us on the words of the blessed Saviour, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." We were also deeply impressed with the small share which human instrumentality has in the great work, and how truly "the excellency of the power is of God." This, we perceived, instead of being an inducement to negligence in training our children, is a · powerful motive to persevere in even the most inefficient means. How far short we came of other parents, of whom we had read, I often was humbled to think of; and now that the blessing was truly bestowed, we felt that to His name alone belonged the glory.

Then, let those who tremble under a sense of their shortcomings, and who have no confidence in instructions communicated by them, but whose prayers and diligence may, to themselves, even, be an evidence how sincerely they "travail in high again, until Christ be formed" in their children, be encouraged. Let them hope in God—they may yet praise him; and while they do hope, let them not slacken their imperfect services. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

"If thos wouldst reap in love, First sow in holy fear; So life a winter's morn may prove To a bright endless year."

The first week of Ann's illness was one of comparative ease. We encouraged ourselves to believe that the decided measures taken to prevent the progress of any complaint in the head, had been blessed to produce this result; and as her strength was little affected by previous disease, we hoped, against secret misgivings which began to intrude, that she was not to be taken from us. Her own impression was quite the reverse. Her natural cheerfulness had returned, indeed, but it was chastened by a full consciousness that she lay on her death-bed. It was not the light-heartedness we had been wont to see, but the composure of one who had been made to feel that she stood upon a Rock which no wave

could shake. She was in the region of the shadow of death, but the rays of the Sun of Righteousness were penetrating the gloom, and opening to her view a happy prospect, far beyond the confines of the valley upon which she had entered. Like Israel of old, she knew that the destroying angel was abroad, but she rested under the security of the blood which He would regard. Christ, her passover, had been slain; she was not only sprinkled with his blood, but she partook of his flesh—he kept her, therefore, in perfect peace, "because she trusted in him."

The composed view which she took of her approaching dissolution, showed the secret but all-sufficient influence by which she was sustained. It is difficult to say whether she conceived her end to be near—she might probably think it farther off a little than it really was—but she always seemed hurt when any attempt was made to persuade her that her sickness was not unto death. On one of the days of this week, she complained to her mother that a servant, who had come into the room to see her, had said that she should soon be well. "It was wrong, mama," she remarked, "to say such a thing; as none but God can know whether I shall get well." Her mother asked if she wished to live; she

hesitated, as if unwilling to say anything that might distress her, and then replied, "It is not my will, mama, that must be, but God's."

The Scriptures were constantly read to her, at her own request; and we engaged regularly in prayer by her bed. She was herself unremittingly engaged in this duty.

"I hope, my dear Ann, you are enabled to look to Christ, and trust in him?" her mother said to her on one occasion.

"O yes, mama," was the answer; "and I wish the whole world would come to him."

On another occasion, when asked if she had been praying, "O yes," she said, "I have been praying for a new heart: I have been asking to be made righteous; and that all of us should be made righteous; and that my heart may be raised entirely off this world."

On a third occasion, when I put the same question to her, the answer was, "I have been praying all day, papa, and have been asking to be made rich in faith. I have prayed that mama, and you, and all of us, may be made rich in faith. There are many rich in money, who are poor in faith; and many who are poor in money, that are rich in faith. O, if we were rich in faith!" Dear child, He who had taught you to pray were

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bestowing greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

How beautiful do the fruits of the Spirit appear in one of so tender an age! In the course of this week she was often leeched on the forehead and temples; she was bled twice at the arm; the sore produced by the blister on the back of her neck was kept open, and powerful means employed to promote a plenteous discharge therefrom: tartaric ointment was rubbed behind her ears, to produce irritation there, to direct the humours from the head; sinapisms were applied to the soles of her feet; the most nauseous medicines were swallowed—all without the slightest murmur or complaint, nay, with a perpetual smile upon her countenance.

Her resignation was very affecting. "It is not my will, but God's now," was a common expression with her; indicating the principle of spiritual life within, which produced this "beauty of holiness" without. Her trust in the Lord was not less affecting. "Are you afraid to be bled, Ann?" her mother asked, on the first occasion on which this operation was to be performed; "for I do not like to see it done, and I would leave the room if you are not alarmed—you know it is your own papa who is to do it." "Mama.

I am afraid," she said; then added, with an expression which told the whole feeling of her soul, "but I know to whom to look."

Towards the end of the first week, notwithstanding all the precautions which had been employed, the pain in the head was not permanently removed; and, besides the unfavourable symptom of its continuance, she began to tell us that she did not see distinctly-that objects appeared double to her; and complained of a tingling pain in one side of her tongue, extending to the fingers of the hand on the same side. On Sabbath the stupor became so manifest, and her articulation so indicative of paralysis, that we could no longer presume to conceal from ourselves the character of the dreadful disease to which she also was about to fall a victim. Indeed, all her symptoms too truly identified her case with that of her little brother: and we had once more before us the prospect of witnessing the departure of another of our beloved babes, under the most distressing ailment to which children are subject. In a day or two, the deep sleep, which at first appears so like the sleep of health, but which soon betrays its true nature, by startings, grinding of the teeth, and pitiable screamings, began to prevail. Every exertion was made, by an increased application of the means already in eso, to alleviate or remove the alarming symptoms; but all that was effected was an occasional dispersion of the come, by which gracious opportunities were, in mercy, granted us of knowing that in the dark valley she was preserved and guided by the Shepherd of Israel. The cloud in which her mind was enveloped, while the Eternal Spirit perfected his work in preparing her soul for glory, was occasionally opened, that we might be permitted to know that God's thoughts towards her were thoughts of peace, not of evil, and that his faithfulness did not fail.

It had been an object of much interest with us, in course of the season, to have our dear children removed from home for the benefit of change of air. Our anxiety on this head grew every day; and, with their rapid decrease in number, we felt as if this alone could be the means of preserving any of them to us. Unfavourable appearances, we imagined, began to show themselves in our youngest surviving child; and although the weather still continued unusually cold, we resolved, under Providence, with whatever hazard, to adopt the measure referred to. The kindness of a gentleman in a neighbouring parish, whose Christian benevolence was so well known,

and who lived but "to do good, and to communicate," afforded a facility of much importance for carrying this into effect. He placed his yacht at our disposal, which, as it was fitted up with every comfort, secured to our poor invalids all the advantages which could be expected during a sea voyage. A clerical friend kindly agreed to accompany them, as I could not myself leave our dear Ann, and we only waited a favourable hour for embarking them. This measure had been so long delayed, by so many intervening causes, that we every moment feared that something would occur in the state of their health to forbid it altogether. But He to whom belong the issues from death was favourable to us: "He staveth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." "For," saith He, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made."

On the Tuesday of the second week of Ann's illness, the yacht unfurled her sails in our bay, and we prepared to part—only for a time, as we trusted—with the three who now remained convalescent, of our once numerous and healthy family. It cannot be wondered at, that on such an occasion we should feel deeply; but the mea-

sure so strongly recommended itself to our minds, as holding out the happy prospect of their recovery, that we were encouraged and comforted under the dispensation. God, we believed, would bless it for the re-establishment of the health of those whom he had yet spared us; and even should he see meet to deny this, it was so plainly a duty that we could not hesitate.

Our dear Ann, under the excitement of the occasion of their departure, was roused from the lethargy of her complaint. Some one had said to her, "Ann, would you not like to be going with the rest?" A visit to ----- had always been an object of their happiest anticipations, and not to be the companion of her brother and sisters, when about to go there, might well be expected to prove a sore disappointment. Ten days before, she was the gayest in the prospect of the journey, and was preparing herself for it; now she was left behind-to die! Her answer to the question showed a heart truly crucified to the world-for what is the world to a child but that from which it promises itself happiness-and that she no longer looked to anything in it as her portion, "No," she said, after thinking for a moment, "I do not wish to go. Christ can make me as happy lying here, as they can be there." Her

manner fully evinced that this was the conviction of her heart, and that she felt as she spoke.

When equipped in their travelling dresses, and just before leaving the manse, the children came into her room to bid her farewell. The scene which ensued was touching in the extreme. The tie which had so long united them was about to be broken, and they were to see each other no more. Recollections of other days-days never to return-seemed to rush into their minds; and, young in years, they sighed under the pressure of sorrows which age even has not always known. Ann's heart was tenderly affected. She took them, one after the other, by the hand, holding them firmly in her own. To her brother she said. "Remember you are now the oldest-you are the head of the rest; O, be diligent in prayer for yourself and them, and be sure the Lord will preserve vou." She then addressed her sister next to herself in age-" Remember your Bible and Catechism," she said: "and, O, be praying for me!" To her youngest sister she said-"Remember your prayers, and be obedient to papa and mama!" She then addressed them all-" You have been very kind to me-O, farewell! The Lord will regard you for it!"

The friend who was to accompany them in the

yacht being present, she said to him—"It is so kind of you, Mr ——, to go with them to ——. I thank you for it, and for all the kindness you ever showed us. Ever since you knew us, you were kind to us—the Lord will regard you for it; for to all who are merciful and kind, he is merciful. All his own people are so; and none but they are truly so." "Farewell!" she said again with a deep sigh, and kissed the children.

Our hearts bled; no one present could refrain from tears. But with the dear sufferer the lucid interval had passed; the insidious disease with which she was struggling again enshrouded her intellect—she relapsed into unconsciousness; and when, in the evening, she revived a little, and I attempted to recall the scene, no trace of it had been left on her mind.

The lethargy was evidently on the increase; and all we could now do was to watch by her, persevering in the use of the various prescriptions with the prospect, if not of cure, yet of the alleviation of the more distressing symptoms. How deeply afflicting, how exhausting to nature, those unavailing efforts are, they only know who have been circumstanced as we were—disease, in so manyinstances, holding its onward course, and baf-fling every human effort to stay its progress—hope

deferred day by day, and expiring at last as each object of our tender solicitude was taken away! Had the Word of God been unknown to us at such a time, or had unbelief been permitted to forbid our resting on its truths as the very revelation of Him who gave being to us and our children, what had become of us! But, indeed. "as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times," that Word in our day of darkness was to us-sparkling with light and perfection, like the high priest's breastplate-" rejoicing the heart-enlightening the eyes,"-appearing "more to be desired than gold, yea, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb." The way to the throne of grace was open too; and though "our flesh and heart did fail, God was the strength of our heart and our portion."

Now, as during the illness of poor Alick, some token for good was shown us each successive day, and the Lord was proving himself a very present help in time of trouble. Even amidst the agitating circumstances of our trial we were often affected to tears by the perception of this; but when the storm had passed, and leisure was granted to look back upon all the way by which the Lord had led us, our hearts were penetrated with the liveliest sense of his enduring faithfulness and tender mercy:

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace; Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face. His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour: The bud may have a hitter taste, But sweet will be the flower."

On the morning after the yacht sailed, the nurse. who had been the faithful attendant of all the children from their birth, was sitting in the room alone with Ann. Dimly perceiving the girl, she called her to approach. "Come near me, Nanny," she said: and when she did so, she moved her hand over her face, to assure herself of her presence. The more easily to gratify her in this, the nurse had knelt by the side of the bed. " Nanny." she said again, rather hurriedly, "you're kneeling: don't kneel to me."-"To whom should I kneel?" "Kneel to God only!" she answered, in a very solemn tone, and then requested her to read to her. While she did so, and very soon after she had begun, the sleep returned, and notwithstanding every effort to resist it, resumed its power, and she was again lost to consciousness.

During the night, intervals of this kind occasionally occurred, when, even amidst the heartrending and helpless screamings so symptomatic of water in the head, her earnest prayers addressed to the Saviour for patience — for all spiritual and eternal blessings — could be heard.

We had made it a rule, when at any time she showed symptoms of returning consciousness, to repeat some text of Scripture close to her ear. In this way her mind was assisted in its feeble exertions, and her soul, we hoped, might be fed with the bread of life. Two days before her death, on an occasion of this kind, her mother, supposing that she perceived some faint traces of consciousness, approached, and repeated these words:—

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I fear none ill."

No sooner were they uttered, than they seemed, with talismanic power, to dissolve her slumber. She immediately opened her eyes, and, with great feeling, added:—

"For thou art with me, and thy rod And staff me comfort still."

She then continued—"O, mama, what would I do without Christ now! what a poor, miserable creature should I be without Him!"

"Do you feel Him strengthening and supporting you, Ann?" her mother asked. "O yes, I feel," she said, hesitating, as if she could not select a suitable word to express her experience, "I feel as if he were pressing me," using her hands so as to describe support or upholding.

I then reminded her that Christ could have a fellow-feeling for her in her sore affliction; for he had been a little child of her own age, and had gone through all the agonies preceding a painful death. I reminded her also of his compassion as a merciful and faithful High Priest, so that in all the afflictions of his own children he is afflicted, suffering nothing to come on them but what is necessary, and what he will give them strength to bear. Her soul seemed nourished and comforted. "O yes!" she said, with great emphasis: "that is very true." I then asked if I should at that time pray with her? "O yes: I'll be very, very glad; and, dear papa, be always praying for me." We then kneeled around her bed, and poured out earnest prayers on her behalf. She remained conscious, and closely attentive for a little; but the cloud returned, and, long before our short exercise had concluded. the deep sleep out of which she had awaked, re-asserted its irresistible influence over her exhausted frame.

In this state she remained for nearly four and twenty hours, excepting that often, especially during the night, she uttered the most plaintive cries, and seemed in great bodily pain. We attempted to comfort ourselves, powerless as we were to relieve her, by thinking that the suffering was all ours who witnessed her condition, and that she herself was not sensible of the affliction under which she groaned. We had now given up every hope that she should again so far recover as to be able to speak to us; and our prayer to the God of all grace on her behalf was, that he would speedily perfect His work in her soul, and receive it, thus purified in his furnace, to his own immediate presence, where there "shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." He, however, had yet mercy in store for our wounded spirits, and was pleased to permit us to hold communion with our beloved child once more, ere she winged her way to the mansions of eternal rest.

Late in the evening of the day before she died, as her mother and the faithful governess, who had been with the children ever since they entered school, were keeping watch by her, she groaned heavily once or twice, and appeared sensible of pain, or some uneasiness. Her mother accordingly requested Miss C. to offer some drink, and to speak to her. During all the time from the previous evening, she had made no reply to any question! To their great joy, when now asked if she would have a drink, she answered, "Yes." When she had swallowed a little, on being asked again if it was good-"Yes, very good," she said; "what is it made of?" Her mother saw that a new opportunity had been granted of addressing her mind, and began to repeat, "Suffer little children to come unto me,"the dear child at once took up the words; "and forbid them not," she continued, "for of such is the kingdom of God." Three times she repeated the passage, and seemed afraid she should be prevented or interrupted in doing so.

I was sent for, being in an adjoining room. She had requested her mother to come near her, for her sight was evidently almost or entirely gone; and she had thrown her arm around her neck, clinging fondly to her, as she continued to repeat the words. On hearing my voice, she unloosed her arm and stretched out both to me. She took hold of me, and seemed to delight in being conscious that she held me, and that I was with her.

"You know my dear Ann," I said, "who

spoke those sweet words you have repeated, and how faithful they must be!" "Yes, I know, papa," she said; "and what would I be if Christ were not with me! I would be in hell. O what would I be if Christ were not with me?" Then, after a little pause, attempting to raise her sightless eyes, she added, "Darling Matilda, you are in heaven, and I shall soon be there too!"

These were the last intelligent words we heard from her. Fearing the rapid return of stupor, we kneeled down that she might once more unite with us, on earth, in the worship of our God and Saviour. For a little moment she was permitted to do this; but the cloud came again, and never till the end did she emerge from it.

As her bodily strength was, comparatively, little wasted, and as, from the shortness of her illness, she was but slightly reduced, we dreaded that, in the closing scene, she would suffer greatly from convulsions. We had the case of her dear brother before our eyes, and torn as our hearts were under the recollection of what we had witnessed in him, we trembled that now our trial should be greatly aggravated. In this agonising anticipation, we besought the Lord, if it might be, to be spared the affliction; and he heard us.

Her complaint made most rapid progress. The plaintive moans and screamings resounded throughout the house during the night. By the morning they had subsided. During the forenoon she lay breathing freely, her features lighted up, and their expression composed and perfectly peaceful. The rapid circulation in the large veins of the neck and throat, seen distinctly as her head lay stretched back upon the pillow, told how quickly life was ebbing away. Soon after mid-day, occasional twitches of the face and contraction of the fingers indicated that convulsions had commenced. We sought to be prepared for the Lord's will; and good is his will. went no farther, and in an hour they ceased altogether. A short interval succeeded in which no symptom of convulsion or distress of any kind appeared; and, at three o'clock exactly, without a sigh or struggle, she ceased to breathe. Time to her was at an end; her sanctified spirit had fled from its frail tabernacle—a body of sin and death -to enter on the inheritance which Christ, whose presence she so sensibly felt in the dark valley. has purchased, and which, in sovereign grace, he bestows on them to whom it is given to believe in his name!

Our beloved Ann died on Saturday, the 26th

May. On Wednesday the 30th, her mortal remains were laid in the silent grave. She was placed on Jessie's left hand, the coffins touching each other. And thus, in the space of six short weeks, with no previous anticipation of such a trial, were we called upon to part with four of our seven darlings, the delight of our eyes and of our heart, and to see them laid side by side in the same grave. There they rest-how precious to us is the spot !--awaiting a glorious resurrection ; placed as, very probably, they would have arranged themselves, if going out to walk-Alexander at Matilda's right hand, and little Jessie between her two elder sisters. They are not, for God has taken them.

"Whate'er we fondly call our own
Belongs to heaven's great Lord;
The blessings lent us for a day
Are soon to be restored.

Tis God that lifts our comforts high
Or sinks them in the grave:
He gives; and when he takes away,
He takes but what he gave."

"Perhaps we loved them too well—perhaps valued them too little; in the meantime, one thing we know—it is well, for God did it."

His purposes in such dispensations as that by

which we have been bereaved are mysterious to us; in them we are made to "drink of the wine of astonishment." But if he makes them occasions for the display of the power and riches of His grace, ought we not to be contented? If He eauses us to rejoice over brands " plucked out of the burning;" over "babes and sucklings," out of whose mouths he perfects praise; and if amidst the sufferings of our offspring, sustaining grace adequate to the affliction be vouchsafed, ought not our mourning to be turned into joy? But for the cloud, the rainbow could not appear, and according to its darkness is the brightness of the token of God's immutable covenant. Abraham, no doubt, received Isaac with great joy, and circumcised him according to the commandment. But God re-demanded Isaac: yet mark the end of the Lord! It was not to grieve and bereave the parent, but to try, and purify, and increase his faith; to give him back Isaac, and load him with further blessings. Christian parents must be the children of Abraham—they must follow his faith—submit to its trials—and. at last, "in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen,"-in the great day they shall receive back their Isaacs, and many blessings besides.

Christ has promised, "I will not leave you

comfortless; in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer." Seasons of great
trial are those in which He especially proves to
his children his faithfulness, according to his
word. The people of the world may then refuse
to be comforted; they may fail to comprehend,
nay, they may misunderstand the source of consolation from which the believer is supplied, when
every stream of human consolation is dried up;
but to him, God indeed "turns his countenance"
—"makes darkness light before him, and crooked
things straight. These things he does, and he
will not forsake him."

By the foregoing Narrative, we desire to set to our seal that God is true, and to encourage his Israel to hope in him; for with him is mercy and plenteous redemption. To obtrude our sorrows on others, merely to relieve our own hearts, were neither justifiable in itself, nor likely to attain the purposed end; but to declare to them who fear God what he hath done for us, either in our own persons, or in those of our beloved offspring; to add our testimony to the evidence of his grace already recorded, or, from day to day being given, may minister encouragement to some of the "little flock," whose case of affliction, when their hour of darkness arrives, may

resemble ours; and it gives glory to Him to whom alone all honour and praise are due.

In the greatest depths, amidst the most trying agitations of sorrow, he who lives by faith, and who has abandoned every legal hope, may be made to adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." There is such an experience—not a vain imagination, nor the offspring of a delusive enthusiasm. consolation is the work of God, and its elements are rich and abundant. It is enjoyed when the believer is enabled, through grace, to justify Him in his severest dealings; sincerely to acknowledge, because he truly feels, that he receives less than his sins deserve, and not one stripe more than the safety of his soul requires: when, in the chastisements inflicted, he is made to discern mercy, inasmuch as others, far more trying, might have been substituted in their room; when a blessed assurance is borne in upon his mind, that not the sword of justice inflicts the wounds for which he mourns, but the rod of parental discipline; when he perceives, in his corrections, the token of sonship, and his spirit revives under the conviction that, all being partakers of them, were he exempted he should be a bastard and

not a son; when a holy assurance is wrought in him, that when judged he is chastened of the Lord, that he should not be condemned with the world; when, under the vigorous actings of faith, every jot and tittle of the Scriptures is to his eye stamped with the living certainty of truth, as if written with light, as "spirit and life"-threatenings vivid as the handwriting on the wall-promises shining with as steady and enduring a flame as the lamp which never went out on the altar of the Lord-and precepts become sweet. and to be desired, as the droppings of the honeycomb; when the world, and all that it contains, weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, or tried by the high standard which measures the things of eternity, is felt to be a "lying vanity;" when the nearness of Christ to the soul, in all the ordinances by which we may approach him, and in which he visits us, is sensibly perceived, and though the veil which "this mortal" interposes. is not, as in Stephen's case, removed to reveal him to sense standing at God's right hand, yet faith experiences his presence and compassion :--then the "peace which passeth all understand ing," and which, over and far beyond every wave of trouble, points to the happy land of promise, "keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jeson the Lord." "Who is among you that fearth the Lord, that obeyesh the vaice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." "Truly God is good to Jazzel."

The world is proce to judge by sense of the condition of the people of God under his dealings. with them; in which case it is not wonderful that they esteem them of all men the most miscrable. These will not drink of the function from which a polluted and destructive relief is drawn by sinners who have never known any other, and who have heard in vain of the "river which makes glad the city of God." "The troubles which affect the just," moreover, are many; while they who fear not God, often, for a time, "have no changes." Yet it is infinitely better, even with reference to the world that now is, to suffer affliction with the one, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin with the other The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with their joy. Is not the case of David, in all his afflictions, with that of Daniel and his companions, recorded; and has not the experience of holy martyrs, in every age, corresponded with, and confirmed the truth attested by those, that God keeps his people as the apple of

his eve. and hides them under the shadow of his wings? True, He himself is their Saviour, and worldly comforts are not the portion with which He feeds them; but is that portion the less real that it is spiritual? nay, is it not this which renders it suitable, substantial, and enduring? "The things which are seen are temporal; those which are unseen, eternal." In the day of great trouble, when the Lord smiles, there is a largeness of confession, a vigour of faith, a closeness of communion, a liberty of intercourse, an earnestness of intercession, a fervour of devotion, a sense of favour, and a deadness to the world, at other times either not granted, or but languidly enjoyed: and the body, ever affected by the state of the spirit, is often, in such circumstances, so strengthened and upheld, that "songs of deliverance" encompass the afflicted, even amidst the "sorrows of death."

None are entitled to wish for trials; in themselves they are not joyous, but grievous; yet they who live by faith, whilst they anticipate days of darkness, ought not to be dismayed. They must pass through the cloud; but Christ will be there. Of the cup which He drank they must partake, though not as He did, and with his baptism be baptized; but his strength will uphold and his grace preserve them. His faithfulness is their buckler, and no emergency can arise for which full provision has not been made in that covenant, of which He is head and surety. The last enemy is as feeble before Him, whether encountered by an infant or a patriarch, as all the rest with whom through life his people are called to contend. Has sin ceased to reign in your mortal body—has the devil been successfully resisted—has the world, in any measure, been overcome? then death, too, will be destroyed through Him who "delivered you out of the paw of the lion and the bear;" and the song of triumph will be sung, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

But let none think that there is no suffering in the Christian's afflictions. If this were so, why should they be sent? Their lamentation and tears in the sight of God tell truly how painful they feel them to be. Their language often is, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" How often was this our language under the pressure of the accumulated affliction laid upon us! Never till then did we comprehend that extremity of grief which affects the bodily powers, so as to induce a torpidity of action, which finds its relief in sleep. The

disciples endured it; for it is recorded that they "slept for sorrow," in the dark hour of their Master's agony. Again and again did He come to them, after he had charged them to watchas if He could have enjoyed some secret comfort from a knowledge that they did so-and found them thus overwhelmed. There is such an extremity, the exclusive product of genuine sorrow. It may come upon those who are dear to Christ; they may be exposed to it, but they will be preserved in it. Though they sink, He neither slumbers nor sleeps. The iron may enter their soul, but its wound is not deadly. Here is their privilege-though "chastened sore, they are not given over to death"-" the blessings of goodness prevent them."

Yet, even in its worst character, theirs is not the "sorrow of the world;" not that of those who "cry not unto him with their heart, though they howl upon their beds." The severity of the stripes with which they are scourged is not so much that which wounds their spirit and weighs them down, as the conviction that their sins have rendered such discipline necessary. O! the anguish with which they are penetrated from this cause; and O! the preciousness of that blood, by which they are washed from their sins, and

re-established in a sense of the favour and friendship of God! How sweet, too, thereafter, a closer and more faithful walk with Christ; a greater deadness to the world and sin; a deeper and more genuine humility; single-hearted devotedness to God and his cause, in simple and exclusive dependence upon that grace which is sufficient, and by which we can do and endure all things!

It may be gratifying to some to know that the three children who for a time were separated from their home, have, in the mercy of God, been restored to their usual health. "Behold, we count them happy that endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."





## CHAPTER V.

- "Hard is the task for man to learn
  To bless the chastening rod,
  And midst his trials to discern
  The guiding hand of God.
- "Fain would I walk in constant light, With life one scene of joy; And see each minute in its flight, As gold without alloy.
- "It must not be; my fickle heart
  To earthly pleasures given,
  Should every gloomy cloud depart,
  Would cease to wish for Heaven."

TWENTY-EIGHT years passed away subsequent to the occurrence of the afflictive incidents narrated in the foregoing pages. Three additional bereavements of a similar kind had, in course of these years, taken place in the family—of infants, or little more than infants. Each of them had brought its grief; but all that our Lord had been to us in the first, He was to us in the new troubles, virtually saying, "I am the Lord, I change not."

At the close of this period the time came when ahe who had been made so much a blessing at the removal of her children was summoned to follow them. The time came, as she herself expressed it, on being seized with her last illness, and on being made aware of its dangerous character, when, like Bunyan's Christiana, she received her letter of notice calling her home.

Nothing special in the circumstances connected with this summons, or with her departure, might have occurred-nothing to afford any good reason for a memorial of the event, a memorial that could be expected to have interest, or to be profitable beyond the immediate circle of her family and friends. Perhaps I should have been glad to have been allowed to think that such was the case. This, however, I was not. The judgment of those whose opinion I was bound to respect took the contrary view. All the more did they think that a record for more general use should be provided, that the things which had occurred, as they believed, were of a kind to furnish a consistent and harmonious sequel-a graceful and hallowed conclusion of the story of bygone years. The hand which drew that narrative remained. A rich blessing both in this and in other lands had been made to follow the recital of the tale of sadness. Might it not be becoming, nay, might not duty demand, that a sequel and conclusion such as had been suggested should be appended? Who could tell but it might be made effectual, through God, for confirming the faith of some, by strengthening their confidence in the sufficiency of divine grace in view of the last conflict, and by encouraging them previous to the arrival of the conflict to use their privilege of rejoicing in anticipation of the hope which is laid up for them in heaven?

It seemed at least to be required of me that I should see whether, on preparing a short account, such as was proposed, the views of friends who had advised it should be justified. Readers of the following pages will forgive the presumption—if they consider it so—of my concluding, perhaps under the influence of some overfond sentiment, that these views were justified; although chiefly because of the foregoing narrative.

Mrs. Beith had never been in better health, apparently, than during the summer and autumn of 1866.

In the previous year our congregation had completed the erection of a missionary hall and

schoolroom in a destitute portion of the town, a locality in which we had for several years before carried on home missionary operations. In this mission work she took a deep interest. Our exertions had recently been greatly extended, and in prosecution of these increased efforts the buildings referred to had been erected. The expense was found to exceed considerably the sum which the congregation had contributed for the object, and which we had all expected would meet every need. Under the circumstances, I was unwilling that we should make any direct fresh demand on their generosity, yet a necessity existed; we required to raise funds.

In our difficulty I betook myself to the female portion of my flock. Our congregation had within twenty-five years erected three churches at a large cost; they had now provided a commodious erection for evangelistic purposes at a good sum; yet they had never had recourse to the method, in these days so often resorted to, of a Sale or Bazaar, for producing any part of the means. I proposed that, by such a measure, the ladies should provide what, at this crisis, we required.

My appeal was first made to Mrs. Beith. Reflecting for a little on what I had proposed, the replied: "Yes; I can help you in that way, and I will do it," at once enumerating the names of female friends, both with ourselves and elsewhere, on whose aid, she said, she could calculate with confidence.

She entered on the prosecution of the project with characteristic promptitude and animation. A short time only elapsed until, as the fruit of her exertions, many kind hearts were interested in our enterprise, and many willing hands were occupied in preparing goods for the mimic market of which we had such sanguine expectations. Encouraged on every hand, the arrangements went rapidly forward, and were completed by the appointed time. The sale was fixed to be held on the 27th and 28th days of September.

On the 5th, she was, during the whole day, busily engaged with a friend in marking the prices of a large assortment of articles, some of which had been consigned direct to her by contributors at a distance, and some of which had been made by herself and the members of her family. She had no apparent ailment. She was on that day cheerful and bright as usual, cherishing happy anticipations of the result of the scheme which we had adopted in behalf of our mission.

Next morning this was the subject of our first sonversation. Difficulties foreseen were spoken of,

and how they were to be met; risks, and how they were to be obviated; possible disappointments, and how they were to be borne. Some shadows lay on the future, but, upon the whole, our prospects were good and hopeful. We believed them to be so.

I had not quitted our bed-room. The conversation had ceased for a few minutes; and from the stillness which followed I imagined she had fallen asleep again, for the hour was early. In a little I was suddenly startled and arrested by hearing what seemed to be unusually deep breathing. Turning towards her, I perceived that her head had slipped down from the pillow, and that she lav as if in heavy slumber. In some alarm, I raised her in my arms. She awoke agitated and deadly pale, and asked what was wrong. instant I feared she was about to expire. fear soon passed. The usual complexion and expression returned. Painful sickness supervened. which we both ascribed to the agitation she had suffered. We were relieved; and expected that rest in bed for the morning, by the blessing of God. would make an end of the sickness. Our medical friend, who was soon with us, took a different view of the case. The prompt measures which he adopted made it clear that he counted the attack a serious one, indeed he did not conceal this from

me. Yet, in view of all the circumstances, we did not give way to depression. It was difficult to realize that there could be danger or much serious ailment where, up to within a few minutes, there had been the best health without the slightest symptom of disease, a robust constitution, and great strength and activity.

A measure of recovery followed the medical treatment. No immediate return of spasm occurred; for the attack which I had witnessed had been spasmodic, and might, I was assured, have ended fatally had no one been present to minister to the sufferer. Though there was no return of spasm, the pulse became very slow—it was not more than thirty in the minute—and it did not rise from this measure, notwithstanding all the means which were so judiciously and assiduously employed to strengthen the circulation. Consultations held with additional medical advisers, called in by our usual attendant, confirmed his views. Her case was serious and alarming.

For nearly ten days matters continued without much change. No real improvement, and no apparent increase of the disease took place. The patient was able to leave her room, and once—only once—to come down-stairs. She was cheen-

ful, and, in a small way, attempted to resume I duties in prospect of the Sale. Though t impression that her time had come, which to possession of her mind from the first appearan of her trouble, never left her, she seemed to us I thought for our comfort's sake-to cherish he that, after no long interval, the disease mig give way, and that God might restore her health. Her most peaceful state of mind, and l contentment, under the visitation, was not me remarkable than consolatory. As to her tempted resumption of work, the willing mi was speedily compelled to yield to the weaker body. Her vigour was gone, too evidently gone, 1 to return. On the part of the ladies, her fello workers in charge of the affairs of the project Bazaar, it was kindly resolved that a postpo ment of the time for holding it should arranged. This, accordingly, was done, and t resolution published. They had made her th leader in all their labours of love, and, until 1 issue of the stroke which had fallen on her a in the meantime separated her from them v seen, they could not further prosecute matte All hoped—perhaps against hope—that the sep ation was temporary. They were satisfied wait, and see.

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About a week before the close of her illness we were alarmed by symptoms of what seemed to be an affection of the head. They were, however, the mere prelude of the return, in an aggravated form, of the first visitation, and soon issued in most distressing spasmodic attacks of the same type, which continued at intervals, more or less regular, to the end.

Almost from the earliest manifestation of her illness, the conclusion arrived at by medical friends was, that in the heart the seat of the disease lay. This now became a melancholy certainty. She was dying: the solemn change might come at any moment! The summons had been given: "Prepare to meet thy God."

She was not dismayed; not even cast down. An extraordinary influence seemed to have descended upon her and upon us all. She was the centre around which we all gathered during the closing days of her life, each of us in succession, or all simultaneously, by day and by night, officiating as her attendants and nurses. She required none other. Our united affections, as they had always been, were now concentrated on her; our attentions were bestowed for her comfort; our time, with a feeling of delight, was devoted to serving her; and a happy enjoyment

hallowed every incident in all the time during these wonderful days.

Except when the spasm was on-except for the few seconds during which each of them lasted -she was in full possession of herself. Her intellect, in all its faculties, never was clearer; her powers of conversation more easily exercised; her frame of mind more composed; her judgment more sound and calm. The spasmodic affections, as they came, sorely distressed us. The effects which, to our eyes, they for the time produced, rent our hearts. We imagined that they must be full of agony to the dear victim of But when, as each visitation passed, she reverted so immediately to her cheerful manner, and resumed, with such accurate recollection of what she had been saving, the conversation which the attack had interrupted, we began to conceive she might be conscious, possibly, of little suffering, though her poor body was so painfully shaken on each return of the enemy. To satisfy myself on this point, on one occasion, after she had recovered from the most alarming of all the attacks. I inquired tenderly and cautiously whether she had endured much pain - particularly, whether she had had any sense of suffocation.

"No pain," she said, heaving a deep sigh, as if

exhausted by fatigue. "No pain—no distress whatever—only a strange confused sound filled my ears. I felt as if some one were turning a wheel rapidly with a harsh disagreeable sound, close to my head. I longed that it should be done. It gradually did cease. When it was quite past, I opened my eyes and saw you all about me, as you had been before I became unconscious of your presence."

" Has it been the same on each of the occasions of spasm  $\$ "

"The same; only on this last occasion the disagreeable sensation has continued longer—much longer than usual. If I am to have many more such, I trust I shall receive patience that I may bear them."

Her recital comforted me greatly. I felt assured that, as to the suffering she might endure in her body in quitting the tabernacle, all the "bitterness of death was past." That "the sting of death" was, in another and in the highest sense of the term, in her case, "taken away," I believed with my strongest convictions; for hers was, and throughout had been—

<sup>&</sup>quot;The child-like faith, that seeks not sight, Waits not for wonder nor for sign, Believes, because it loves, aright."

On her account, therefore, as she lay there, the beloved companion of a long life, on the eve of being separated from me, of being "sent away" not to return, I could utter no lamentation. As to my loss, I was not at the time occupied with the thought of it. The circumstances of the solemn scene which was in progress were exclusively the subject of my thoughts, and now, if ever, "sorrowing" and "rejoicing" combined, were, in a rich measure, experienced.

As her time ran on to a close, she became, not resigned merely, but cheerful - communicating the feeling, whilst she herself excelled in it, to all around her. With a calmness and a composure beyond all fabled and all romantic descriptions of dying sages and departing saints of historic record, she set her house in order. Nothing that required to be arranged, or that she conceived required to be arranged, by her in prospect of her separation from all connection with earthly concerns, was forgotten, overlooked, or omitted. Had the separation been one which she anticipated was to be only temporary-a departure involving an absence limited in duration, soon to be followed by a happy home-coming-she could not have been more self-possessed, or more mindful of every minute detail which, under the circumstances, demanded attention. Here a little detail may be forgiven.

She told her daughters how, she thought, they should divide among them her personal property, and what of it they should bestow on relations at home and absent.

She had her grave-dress, which she had prepared with her own hands, laid past. She instructed them where they should find it.

She directed whom they were to employ to perform the last offices after death, including all that is usual on such occasions. For part of these services she named a poor woman of whom her only knowledge was that she had been discovered, in course of the mission-visitations, in much destitution, but willing to work, to aid herself and her family. A promise had been given that some work should be provided: the promise was recalled, and kept.

Two days before the funeral, on my suggesting to my eldest daughter, now in charge of the house, the propriety of having something prepared when the sad services of the day were done, for the refreshment of relations and friends who might attend from a distance, I received as answer that all had been arranged; that her mother had told her that this would be necessary, and, further, had in-

structed her what should be provided on the occasion, and how all should be arranged on the tables, adding that at a funeral repast everything should be cold, having been dressed previously, to prevent all unseemly occupation of servants at such a time.

On one of these days, reflecting that as Treasurer of our Congregational Female Association, and likewise as holding the same office in the management of the Infant School, she had lodged in bank moneys belonging to each of these institutions, for which she held receipts, she stated the circumstance to me, and proposed that she should indorse the receipts, as that might save trouble and expense in raising the sums when she was gone, adding, "I am quite able as yet to write my name, if you think what I have proposed ought to be done." I answered that I should make inquiry whether it were necessary, and that we should guide ourselves by the information I obtained. I ascertained that the measure was not necessary. This I communicated to her. She seemed relieved, and, looking up to me as I stood by her bed, she said, with one of her sweetest expressions of face:---

"I cannot tell how happy I feel that I have nothing to do with money, now that I am dying —happy that I have none to leave, none to be the occasion of coldness or dispeace among my beloved children."

If,

"At death's approach,
All read their riches backward into loss,
And mourn in just proportion to their store,"

she might well congratulate herself as she now-did.

"Was there ever queen," she then exclaimed, "so favoured as I am—so ministered to—so gently and tenderly nursed—and all by my own family, and my dear husband?"

The use of the word queen seemed to suggest to her mind our sovereign Victoria. Shortly before her illness began, she had read with profound interest what she called the Queen's book—the translations from the German which Her Majesty, a little while ago, edited and published. She, in a few words, expressed her joyful trust in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; that which shall constitute the consummation of the great redemption, and be so glorifying to Him who is Himself the "First-begotten from the dead," the "Forerunner" of his people in the heaven of glory.

Besides the money which lay in bank belonging

to the Female Association and Infant School, there were two small sums—balances which she had in hand to meet ever-occurring applications and necessary outlays. As to these, she calmly informed her daughter where they were to be found, directed her to the account of the payments already made, explaining that the sums remaining would be found, in both cases, to correspond with the accounts. She then added:—

"In such a drawer you will find three pounds. It is the last of a sum for my own private use which Gilbert (her eldest son) gave me some time ago. Take that and divide it with your two sisters. There is nothing more of that kind I have to think of."

When I was afterwards told of this incident it greatly affected me. I felt elevated in reflecting on her spiritual condition, on her redeemed soul being so entirely unencumbered as to all earthly entanglements in the closing hours—as unencumbered as a child's of a week old entering the gates of death—whilst I at the same time rejoiced in the power of the glorious gospel through which such grace, and all grace, comes to God's saints. "Ah," I said, "if we were all Christians, and if in our money transactions we acted on Christian principles—in the spirit of Christian faith, and

love, and confidence—how simple a thing would the bequeathing of money, and the inheriting of it on bequest, be! How simple and how satisfactory would all such transactions prove!"

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us."

"Around the death-bed of the good
What dear remembrances will hover,
And haunt us with no vexing mood
When all the cares of earth are over."

Her family were all with her. Those of them who resided at a distance came, and remained till all was past. Full, faithful, discriminating, most affectionate addresses were made to us all. Sometimes what she said was sublime in sentiment; for she spake as if she had a commission to execute which she could not neglect, or as if she felt that an opportunity of usefulness had been presented to her which she was bound to faithfully employ.

She delivered charges to each of her children separately, and to as many of her grandchildren as were present, in a manner the most tender taking a loving farewell, and commending them to God.

The servants were called in. Them she ad-

dressed, one after the other, solemnly and earnestly reminding them of her attempts to instruct them; charging them to seek Christ, and to become followers of Him by a living faith. Her words to an aged domestic, who had been for more than thirty years a member of the household, and was still of our number (she had been with us in all our trials of bygone years), were peculiarly touching. It was the only occasion on which I noticed a tear steal down her cheek. Past scenes seemed for a little moment to be recalled. Other death-beds, with varying hopes and fears, had been watched by them together. It was the children then: it was the mother now!

She sent messages to several friends for whom she cherished warm regard.

"Tell — to look to Jesus—to look from herself within to the Saviour without. You never get rest by looking within. All my comfort comes from feeling myself to be by nature a poor lost sinner, and seeing Christ to be a great Saviour—a Saviour suited to my case. 'God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' It is our duty, as much as our privilege, to be cleaving unto Him; yet, it is his hold of us, not our hold of Him, which saves."

"Tell — to cast her burden on the Lord. He will sustain and carry her through her present trial. I have to praise God for my children."

To another friend: "Tell her what a blessed book the Bible has been to me in this illness. Every other fails. Cling to the Word, and to Jesus in the Word. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' We are sinners depending on his grace. I hope to meet her before the throne. She has a true, kind heart."

These are specimens merely of her utterances -examples only of the forms in which she evidently desired to finish her course with joy, as a witness for Christ-being faithful unto death. There was nothing forced, nothing assumed, nothing unusual,-no getting up of a scene. Her spirit would have shrunk from such a thing. The poor who were accustomed to have the benefit of her visits in their homes, could testify with what modesty, with what a humble spirit and manner, and how much by stealth even, she ministered religious instruction, admonition, and comfort, and helped them to call on the name of the Lord. They could so testify of her, and they chiefly could; for-I state it not as matter of praise, or as what ought to be an example to others, but merely as characteristic of her, and as illustrative of what I have just said—she never formed one of a mothers' association even, though often solicited, and never was known to take part in these useful meetings. Such was not the line in which she thought herself qualified to walk. In this there was nothing inconsistent with the fact that, on occasions of my absence from home, she conducted worship in the family with the children and servants—then not using any form of prayer or prayer-book, either printed or written.

When, on the approach of the last messenger, she spoke so openly, her audience consisted of her children, and, on one occasion, the medical friend who so tenderly watched her case. To her children there was nothing unusual, nothing strange, nothing to which they were unaccustomed, nothing to be ascribed to undue excitement, in her dying words and in the testimony which she declared to them. To her medical friend there was nothing to occasion surprise. He was not unfamiliar with her habitual earnestness of feeling in the cause of her blessed Redeemer-none who frequented our house wereand her habitual, not undue, forwardness to maintain it before others, when called so to do. Moreover, she had confidence in him as one who could sympathize with her in her present purpose. and who could appreciate her motives and desires. Her consciousness of the nearness of her separation from this world, gave animation to her expression, and quickened her resolution to depart with a conscience void of offence towards God, through faith in Jesus; and with a conscience void of offence towards man, by discharging what she believed to be the closing duty of her religious life. This was the sentiment which governed her when she gave expression to the things which she uttered, that they might be communicated to others. The love of God was shed abroad in her heart, and she sought to exalt Him. The love of her fellow-men was there, as a subordinate but inseparable principle of her sanctified nature, and she sought to do them good as the solemn circumstances in which she now found herself gave opportunity. It was the life of Christ in her breaking forth in heavenly brightness before our eyes ere she passed within the veil to be with Him, to see Him as He is, to behold his beauty, and to await his coming again, and all his saints with Him, to be glorified in them.

The public interest excited by her case, when

it became known that her life was in danger, grew very strong. The interest was not confined to our congregation, nor to persons of our com-All classes shared the feeling-our munity. neighbours and those at a distance. To us this was deeply affecting and grateful. To others it seemed surprising. A minister, comparatively a stranger among us, and who observed the state of the public mind, told me that he had never, in course of his experience, known any such intensity of anxiety awakened on account of any private individual. He had seen such anxiety for ministers, and for men filling prominent places in the Church and the world when their lives, valuable to the community at large, were believed to be in danger; but he had never witnessed anything so remarkable in the case of one, and especially a female, not so situated. Dr. Buchanan of Glasgow being with us, spoke of his gratification in witnessing such a striking testimony, as he expressed it, to "simple goodness."

In course of the week before her death, some of the office-bearers of our congregation held a meeting for prayer, to seek God on her behalf—to entreat that He might spare her life, so valuable to many; that He might prolong her time on the earth, and sanctify to herself and

others the heavy affliction he had been pleased to send. This meeting was largely attended—the attendance not being confined to the people of my flock, but embracing others besides.

As the Sabbath drew near, hope of her recovery became faint. So great was our alarm, or rather so persuaded were we that her hour was at hand, that none of our family ventured, when the day came, to attend public service in the church. A friend from a distance officiated for me. My place, during all the day, was by her bed, where, from hour to hour, I expected her release, and her entrance on the promised rest. She had heard of the meeting for prayer which had been held a few days before. now was informed that another meeting for the same object had been intimated from the pulpit at the request of the elders, and that, in the evening, it was to be held in the church. information produced in her the strongest emotion of gratitude. God had put it into the hearts of the worthy men. It was surely a token for good. If He gave a spirit of prayer, He would answer prayer.

After a pause, during which her mind seemed exercised with the thought of the form which the interest on her account among the members of the congregation had taken, she said to me, in a humble, subdued, solemn strain,—

"Oh, send word that, if any allusion be made to me by those who are to take part in the services of the meeting, they do not magnify me, but that they exalt Christ. I am a poor sinner saved by his grace, and nothing more."

On the day on which she died, she used the same words in addressing me, after saying sweetly,—

"You cannot preach next Lord's Day; a friend will fill your place. Oh, be sure to tell him, if he alludes to me, not in any way to magnify me, but to exalt Christ only. When you resume preaching, plead with the congregation-plead with all classes alike—to make sure work of a saving interest in Christ; with those who have not closed with Him, to hasten to do it; with those who have, to abide in Him. Oh, if my voice were permitted to extend to them at this hour, and if it belonged to me to do such a thing-if it were permitted to extend to the whole world-how I would tell of what He is to me; of what He is doing for me; how precious He is; what strength and peace He is ministering to my soul."

She told us that no darkness had been per-

mitted to fall on her from the time she had been seized. Faith had been given wonderfully. Her peace had been as a river. The words, "Fear not. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," had been vividly borne in upon her mind, and had been kept there, as expressing to her a truth which she was called on to hold fast and to use. Her conviction on this head was fixed and determined. Such grace the good Lord gave. I felt it to be the blessed reward which He bestowed in the end in token of his pleasure with the simple trust-always the characteristic of her faith—she had ever reposed in Him. On one occasion, when she repeated the above-quoted words—such occasions were frequent with her-she added,-

"Christ's promise, how precious! 'In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, I will come again to receive you to Myself.' Faithful is He who hath promised. If I have many more of the spasms ere He takes me to Himself, I know He will give patience to bear them. Patience must have its perfect work."

The church bells, as they rang, attracted her notice. "Ah," she exclaimed, "the Sabbath bells! Sweet, sweet sound! How dear to me

has that hallowed day been in all my pilgrimage! Oh the happy Sabbaths at Oban, in Glasgow, at Killrandon, at Glenelg, and in Stirling! The toils of the week and the sorrows of the week, how much more cheerfully they were borne in anticipation of the coming time of sacred rest!"

During all this day her thoughts were far more in the "better country" to which she was going than with us. Among other things indicative of this, she began to recount the Christian friends with whom she had been associated on earth, who, she was assured, were in glory, and whom she expected to meet when she quitted the body. It was deeply affecting to listen to the words, as they came from her lips, enumerating by name these friends, describing their excellences; and to witness at the same time her animation as she did it—animation which increased as she proceeded in what appeared to be a delightful exercise.

"They would all welcome her; and then, together, she and they would praise and magnify the Lord, world without end."

Her thoughts carried her far back—to her earliest history. A half-witted elderly woman, who, in her native town, was brought under the power of the truth about the time she herself was,

whose spiritual as well as temporal interests she had helped, and who, all her life, had been greatly attached to her, was among the first whose names were spoken of as those she expected so soon to meet again. On one occasion, after I had removed from my charge in Hope Street, Glasgow, to the parish of Killrandon, Argyleshire, this poor, good creature came to visit her friend. In the night, long after all had retired to rest, she was overheard by the servants, who slept in an adjoining apartment, and who had been awakened by her voice in the deep darkness, wrestling in earnest prayer for us, and for our two children. The incident was recalled in connection with the recollections and the anticipations of the present Sarah Gillies' name was prominent in the numerous list of departed loved ones-the old, the young-those related to herself, as well as those not: "And my honoured father and mother!" were the words with which she completed the climax, and concluded the pleasant enumeration.

She was going to the "spirits of the just made perfect." She seemed as if she felt that her fellowship was just about to be thenceforth with them. God was preparing her for the change from the fellowship on earth. She was, above all, going If the setting sun glistened on the sheen of one such fibre, the risen sun could not.—I know not," she continued, with great feeling, "whether the departed are permitted to take any interest in the affairs of the world. If they are, I will be a ministering spirit, a guardian angel to you—to you all."

"You will have higher interests to serve," I answered. "You will be the subject of glorious affections, such as you have never known here. These you will obey."

We had, by our little conversation, started a question which some have thought worthy of discussion, and on which they have formed a somewhat decided opinion. The following passage occurs in Lord Kinloch's work, entitled "Studies for Sunday Evening:"—

"It is a touching and consoling thought which has been sometimes suggested, that, amongst the ministering spirits sent forth by God, there mingle to some extent the spirits of the departed from earth. There is nothing in Scripture absolutely to forbid the supposition; and, if tempered by entire deference to God's will, whatever it may the, the thought is one upon which the devout mind thay legitimately expatiate. It is a thought which,

on the Christian's death-bed, has often afforded the most exquisite comfort, at once to the departing saint and to those whom his assurance supported. To the bereaved mourner it is calculated. above most others, to give to remembrance its most soothing appliance. Scarcely any ordination from on high can be conceived more accordant with the tenderness of God's love. We have still beside us, though unseen, those beloved ones who walked with us on our earthly pilgrimage. We have their help and their sympathy still afforded us. We have their counsels and their consolations communicated to us as before; and sometimes with so distinct an apprehension as to make the voice of old affection break forth in an audible accent. We have now no solitude. The former days are not gone entirely. The old companionship remains. The old bond is still en-Death has not effected a separation. twined. The grave has been powerless to break the communion of saints."

Pleasant words to read! a pleasant theme to dwell on! a comfort-ministering doctrine, if we could absolutely receive it! One thing we know: by whatever agency, the Lord Himself it is who comforts those who mourn, who speaks peace to the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds.

The sentences I have quoted, however, are "good words and comfortable words." To me it is a pleasure to find them come from the pen of a friend of my boyish college days, whom I rejoice to recognize now as a brother in Jesus Christ.

During the progress of the trouble of our beloved sufferer, when she was no longer able to read, when the weight of the book as she lay in bed became too fatiguing, passages of Scripture, selected by herself, were statedly read to her. How truly they constituted the bread of life to the hungry soul was very manifest. The Spirit of all grace made his truth to be "spirit and life."

The Psalms were her special delight. Some of them she asked us to sing with her. We did so. The choir consisted of mother, father, sons, and daughters, and on occasions other relatives. She took her part, and sang with such steady fulness of voice and such pathos, as again and again to remind me of how she sang in the days of her youth, and as to recall the times when, morning and evening, year after year, to an ever-increasing circle of tender voices trained to mingle with ours, she led the music of the worship in our family. Of late years she had given over doing so—reluctantly on my part, even if the singing

was improved by the change. When, around the death-bed, we adopted the exercise of praise in this form, it imparted a remarkable elevation to our minds. Never were there sounds of harmony more sweet, more soothing, more sanctifying. We very often returned to it; for, followed as it always was by prayer, we found therein a pleasing channel for the expression of all the devotional feelings of our hearts. The season was eminently one of quickening. God was in the midst of us. We sang with the spirit, and we sang with the understanding also. There was real praise, real thanksgiving and adoration; for, through his grace, we "prepared our hearts before the Lord our God," and He caused us to "prosper." Amidst the experiences of this occasion, so full of hallowed enjoyment, the conviction -- not a new one -- was strongly impressed on my mind, as well as on all our minds, that much loss of Christian privilege is incurred by shortcoming in the duty of praise. In our fellowship with God, ought not our praise to bear a due proportion to our petitions and supplications? Is it not in such a case that we are to expect answers of peace? Why should not Christians praise? Why should they not offer the sacrifice of praise continually? Why should they not in every thing give thanks? What can be so appropriate to them under all circumstances? What especially can be so appropriate, when one saved by grace is passing on to enter into eternal rest and glory, being within sight of the gates, and within hearing of the sounds of the celestial city? What, finally, can be more honouring to the God of our salvation, to whom praise belongs?

"Praise God. From heavens praise the Lord,
In heights praise to Him be.
All ye his angels praise ye Him;
His hosts all, praise Him ye.
O praise ye Him, both sun and moon;
Praise Him, all stars of light.
Ye heavens of heavens Him praise, and floods
Above the heaven's height.
Let all the creatures praise the name
Of our almighty Lord:
For He commanded, and they were
Created by his word."

On the night of the 24th of September Mrs. Beith slept comfortably, and next morning awoke refreshed. In the early part of the day all saw, and she felt, that some change in the form of her ailment had come. She told us that she knew she was approaching a crisis, and that the day would decide her case. So much relieved was she that for an hour or two we actually permitted our-

selves to hope—against hope, it might be—that the impeding and encumbering influence which had clogged the action of the heart, had, under God's hand, finally given way, yielding to the means which had been employed, and that temporary recovery might follow. A gleam of joy, in view of that possible eventuality, passed over us. It was soon gone. Our glorying and rejoicing were not to be for her bodily restoration, but for something far higher.

Soon after noon a spasm—the worst for that day—awakened us to the true state of matters. At no long interval it was followed by another. These fresh attacks seemed to exhaust her strength for the time, more than previous ones of the same kind had done. Yet she was without consciousness of pain, although to our eyes she appeared sensible of her growing feebleness. It alarmed us that she ceased to be able to receive the things for nourishment and for sustaining strength which our medical friend had prescribed. Up to this point she had used them willingly, and to her comfort. She could do so no longer. Her cheerfulness and contentment, however, were unchanged.

"You are feeling this a Bethel," it was remarked to her.

"Oh, yes; the very gate of heaven. He is giving me tokens. He has truly been in this place. He is keeping the enemy far away. No dart has been permitted to disturb my peace. Praise his name."

A little after she said: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? King of kings, and Lord of glory, Maker of heaven and earth, why tarriest Thou? Come, Lord."

She was heard, when she thought herself alone, with eyes closed, earnestly engaged in prayer. That done, she said aloud: "I die in peace with all men. I go where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

As the afternoon approached the attacks of spasm increased. I was sitting alone with her when one of them came. She took my hand, and grasping it, at the same time looking intently into my eyes, said, with great feeling:

"Let me go, love; let me go. Oh, if you knew how I long to go to Christ, to be with Him!"

I was surprised at the form of address. It seemed to indicate an impression existing in her mind that I was, in some way, detaining her This struck me the more, because of what had occurred with me a very little before. I answered the appeal by saying:

"Only about an hour ago I got liberty in my soul to resign you into the hands of our common Lord. Up till that time I had been pleading with Him to spare you, whilst He perfected his work in your soul, and made you more and more like Himself. I have ceased to pray that you should be kept with us. I have asked now that He may take you to Himself. He has left you long, in much kindness, with us. I have asked that, as your Lord and Saviour, He may minister unto you an entrance abundantly into his everlasting kingdom."

It was a deeply affecting moment to us both. A pause ensued, while she still held my hand. At length she said, with quivering lip:

"Thank you, thank you, love! I am sorry to leave you all; but to go to be with Him, how blessed! My spirit is on the wing!"

Our communing was all but done. Such was the closing incident of our earthly intercourse—begun so long ago, and continued under so many and such varied conditions and circumstances. A conclusion must have come some time, in some form. Could it have come in one more worthy of her whose soul was in departing, or more

comforting to me; above all, in one more hosparing to the Lord, who had formed her for Himself!

A bad spasm, about five o'clock, warned us that the time could not now be long. A little while after she asked me to repeat the three closing verses of the seventy-second Psalm. I proposed that we should bring the young people into the room, and that we should sing them together once more. We had already sung them with her more than once. She replied that she had not now strength for it. I repeated them:—

"His name for ever shall endure;
Last like the sun it shall:
Men shall be bless'd in Him, and bless'd
All nations shall Him call.
Now blessed be the Lord our God,
The God of Israel,
For He alone doth wondrous works,
In glory that excel.
And blessed be his glorious name
To all eternity:
The whole earth let his glory fill.
Amen, so let it be."

She kept time with her hand; then raising it, and laying it down solemnly, she said,

"Amen, Amen, so let it be."

These were almost the last words which came

from her lips. She then lay quite still, apparently in meditation and secret prayer.

Towards six o'clock the shadows of the evening were darkening the room. No one was there at the time with her but my sister and myself. After sitting in silence for a short space, a little restlessness in the dear patient gave indication that a spasm was approaching. My finger was immediately on the pulse. I gave a sign to my sister to call the watchers from the adjoining apartment. They entered.

"He is coming. I hear Him. I hear the sound of his chariot wheels now," she said meekly, in an under tone, giving me a last look.

"There now," she added, turning her face to a side and closing her eyes.

The pulse ran rapidly on, with diminishing force, to a single faint beat. It had done so in all previous spasms, and had uniformly returned hitherto, throb upon throb, beginning the retrogression after the shortest intermission, by the slightest possible movement, until it had regained its habitual slow beat. I watched for the same now; and, as the spasm had been the least distressing of all that had visited her, I expected the return. There was a moment of most painful hesitation—only a moment.

"It removes," i men soon

Ales : imagination spoke; affection spoke; only these. The last swell of the tide of life in her frame had ment itself. The silver cord was The guiden bowl was broken. The great centre of corporeal life had settled into the meticuless quietude which was never to be disturbed! Without any conflict whatever-without a pang-without the least expression indicative of pain-without a moan-without a sigh-without change of feature, she had passed. The tabermade lay uninhabited. It had served its purpose. Dust, it had now to return to the earth as it was, in due time to reappear, to be changed, to be fashioned like unto the Master's glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself:---

" Nay, grieve not for the gentle spirit fled.

A flood of love that ahone in truth's bright ray, Welled from her soul and burst its bonds of clay. From earth to heaven her spirit winged its course, And joined the boundless ocean of its source."

"For ever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be;
Life from the dead is in the word—
"Tis immortality."

As my eyes rested, in that twilight, on her pros-

trate form—as I marked the serenity of the countenance, the perfect absence of all trace of painfulness, the calm repose of every feature—I was, for the time, forcibly reminded of a passage in one of the volumes of Dr. Trench—his volume on the Miracles. It occurs in his concluding remarks on the raising of Jairus's daughter:—

"As the body of one freshly dead," he says, "from which life has but just departed, is very different from a mummy or a skeleton, so is it, though not in so great a degree, different from a corpse whence, for some days, the breath of life has fled. There is, so to speak, a fresh trodden way between the body and the soul which has just forsaken, and, according to that Jewish legend which may rest in a very deep truth, lingers for a while and hovers near the tabernacle where it has dwelt so long, and to which it knows itself bound by links that even now have not been divided for ever. Even science itself has arrived at the conjecture that the last echoes of life ring in the body much longer than is commonly supposed; that for a while it is full of the reminiscences of life. Out of this we may explain how it so frequently comes to pass, that all that marked the death-struggle passes presently away, and the true image of the departed, the image, it may be,

of years long before, reappears in perfect calmness, and in almost ideal beauty."\*

Can these things be so? I inquired of myself, conscious of a strange unwillingness to withdraw from the bed where the dead lay, when affectionately urged to do so, as long as I thought the emancipated, blessed spirit, might be lingering there. I soon recovered myself by the reflection, that if such things be true, they have not been given to us, and that death—not the corruption following—separates us from the best beloved of our hearts, makes an end of the closest and the most prolonged earthly relationships, and finally interrupts all intercourse from either side—from the departed with us, and from us with them.

I cannot say, though I knew this, that I

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;We often make too much of what is called death, and suppose that we have a deeper and fuller knowledge of it than we really have. For when you see a person die, what do you see? The outward and material phenomena of dissolution, and that is all; and even these most confusedly, imperfectly, and indistinctly. There are causes at work, and principles in action, and essences in conflict, altogether impalpable to our senses. They are too subtle and abstract for our penetration. The eye, exquisite and complicated as is its mechanism, is too coarse an organ for the inspection of all the processes of this great change. We magnify exceedingly the powers of vision beyond their real virtue; for we never see more than the surface of things, nor even this without light; and incredible and most glorious transactions may be taking place around us, of which we have no perception-as the prophet's servant found when a glance was permitted him into the invisible world, and the horses and the chariots of fire flashing to and fro were seen around his master Elisha."-Stratten.

realized it. I cannot say that I realize it now. On the contrary, I have often to check a strange expectation which obtrudes itself, and imparts a short-lived, delusive cheerfulness, that the absence is only temporary, and that a happy "COME BACK" is at hand. Ah mel vain thought! The separation from this world is final. A new relationship awaits the reunion in that which is to come. In the prospect of it I rejoice. Meanwhile I weep:

"Oh, what are thousand living loves,
To that which cannot quit the dead."

Our married life had extended to within a very few months of forty-two years. When I began my ministry, at the early age of twenty-two, in the native town of her whose gracious end these pages record—the town of Oban, Argyleshire—she was in her early girlhood, little more than a child, the second daughter of John Robson, Esq. of that place, of a family of some distinction in Yorkshire, who, with other offices of respectability, held at this time the Government appointment of Collector of Customs. Her mother was the daughter of one of the celebrated brothers Stevenson—enterprising men who built the town of Oban, and introduced an extensive commerce into a portion of the Highlands which, though in the

present time near the great world, was then executed country.

Junia. Romers was the first-finite of my ministry. I received her into the communion of the church—the earliest in whose case I undertook that selemn responsibility, in a hoppy assumance of her convenion to God—when she was not more than filtern years of age. Four years thereafter, when I had been satisful a few months in the pastorate of Hope Suret Chapel, Glangow, she became my wife. Fourteen children were the fruit of our union—all of them named by their mother. Seven preceded her into the presence of the Lamb, and seven survive. How truly she was a mother in Israel, they who survive remain to testify, to the praise of the grace which was given to her.

Let us, however, never forget, when we dwell on circumstances connected with the departure of loved ones from the world, that the question of real moment is not the manner of their death, but rather the character of the preceding life. That must always be held to be the true test by which we are to judge of the existence of the divine nature, and of the triumphs of divine grace in those whom we shall see no more here.

It is no part of my purpose to write Mrs.

Beith's life, nor even briefly to sketch her course. That her life was consistent, becoming, discreet, attractive, worthy of her Christian profession, and to the praise of Him who formed her for Himself—that it was so from her earliest years, as well as in the various places in which, during our long career, our lot together was cast, all who knew her intimately will testify. Without at any time in the least leaving her proper place and sphere of action, without intruding into things which lay beyond that sphere, she proved herself to be a fellow-worker in the gospel, prudent, and of great value. Her quiet but ever operating influence never failed to be felt, and to be effective of good.

Our removal from the parish of Glenelg to the parish of Stirling took place about a year after the occurrence of the events recorded in the Narrative. The change from a very thorough country Highland life to a town life, and from the duties of the one to the duties of the other, tested her character in a new form. How soon her active, energetic mind adapted itself to her new sphere many circumstances testify. With a most faithful, unremitting, and very successful discharge of the duties required for the management of a large family, she found time for reading,

time for visiting statedly the female pulsoners in the county jail, and for taking part in conducting the affairs of the Charity and Infant Schools. She instituted and became the life and spring of our congregational Female Association. She never was wanting when advice was required and asked for. To all which may be added, that the claims of a somewhat extensive hospitality ever had her large sympathy, and her most cheerfully rendered service.

How nobly she acted in the time of the great struggle which preceded the Disruption of the Establishment in Scotland, as well as when that event actually occurred, I, of all men, know best-her clearness of apprehension of the vital question at issue—her determination of purpose regarding it—her steadfastness of principle—her simplicity of faith—her cheerfulness of hope. That she was capable of understanding and appreciating the merits of our great controversy, which has been such a puzzle to many, will be believed when I state, as a specimen of her usual reading, that Calvin's life by Dr. Merle D'Aubigné was the latest work with which she had occupied her mind; and, so deeply interested had she become in the course of the great Reformer, that she resolved to study his Institutes, and had

engaged me to procure the English translation for her.

I would not exalt her above other wives of ministers in that season of testing and trial. Our country, at no period of her ecclesiastical history, possessed perhaps a nobler band of witnesses for the truth-were all the facts known-than she did in the ministers' wives in those years—years made dark to us by a multiplicity of causes. This I had good opportunity of knowing. To what extent female adherence to the interests of our Dis-established Church throughout Scotland, an adherence distinguished by such a wonderful amount of effort on the part of our "honourable women "-effort crowned always with such success-may be traced to the example and influence of the wives and daughters of the manse, I will not take upon me to say. But that such example and influence were mighty, every one cognizant of the facts belonging to the time will be ready to acknowledge; and, moreover, that the success of the agency thus evoked has not ceased, but rather has increased, year after year, until this day. delight thus to record a thing which I know other ministers of those times can fully sympathize in, each in his own case—how much my heart was cheered, how much my hands were strengthened,

how much my tails were lightened, and my hopes encouraged by this most gesteful element of sid. Many a time and oft, with an overflowing heart, I repeated to her, pleased to listen to me, the well-known lines:—

> \* O vocate! in our hours of ours Uncertain, coy, and hard to plante.

When pain and anguish wring the brow, A ministering angul thou."

Mrs. ---, the wife of the principal handward heritor of our parish-a person of benevolent disposition and warm heart, of good understanding and of religious principle, whose convictions, I was persuaded, were with us in the struggle which agitated the Church and country, but in whom, as in so many of her class, "the pride of life." when the crisis came, overmastered, as I thought, better and more hallowed feelings,—this. lady took not a little interest in my wife, and in our local proceedings. Not once nor twice. merely, but repeatedly, did she, in really intended kindness, appeal to her to consider seriously the folly of abandoning, for a theory of Church government, as she called it, her earthly subsistence—a sacrifice which she foresaw awaited -with a young and increasing family to provide

for. Her appeals were valued for their sincerity, and for the friendliness which dictated them; but only for that.

A few days after the Disruption, on our return from the General Assembly, passing along in her carriage, the lady descried Mrs. Beith at a little distance. The horses were pulled up, a signal was made inviting her to approach. This was done, and kindly greetings took place on both sides.

"So you have carried out your purpose, my good friend?"

"We could do nothing else. Not upon us rests the blame, if blame there be, in what has taken place."

"And how do you expect to subsist now? What provision have you in prospect for your family?"

"God will see to that," was the reply, cheerfully expressed.

After a short pause, and with emotion which could not be concealed, the lady said:

"You are right. You trust Him. He will provide, and you will never know want. I wish you all that is good. Farewell."

The carriage drove on. I question whether our friend did not at that moment feel — for she had

an understanding heart—that a moral superiority, an elevation of character, a dignity of position, apart from contentedness and peacefulness of conscience, attached to the humble individual to whom she had addressed herself, which no wealth, no rank, no association with the great and the distinguished of the world, could compensate. Who the happier of the two as they parted was, I need not decide. One, at any rate, had, by consistent and unshaken adherence, honoured great truth—truth, the maintenance of which in Scotland, through all loss and all suffering, in bygone generations, had exalted our beloved country, and made her great among the kingdoms of the earth.

That God did see to the case of those who, that they might be true to the interests of the kingdom of his dear Son in our land, had forsaken their means of earthly subsistence, is a great fact—an event in the external history of the Church which has attracted the attention of the world, and produced no small wonder. The contributions to the cause of religion among us since 1843 have been, to say the least, on an unprecedented scale looking to all past times. We have certainly had enough and to spare.

As for us, with a considerably diminished

income, we knew no change in our outward com-She of whom I have written often declared her conviction --- from which she would not be moved—that money went further with her than ever it had been wont to do before. Somehow our balance at the end of the vest suffered no diminution by the change which had occurred. In one view this may be ascribed to a domestic economy which never was at fault; but, indeed, it is truly to be ascribed to His goodness who can increase the store of those whom He feeds, so that, when every want has been gratified, there will be remains, by basketfuls, to be gathered. How it came it is needless to search; but true it is, at no other period of our lives did we suffer less anxiety for the provision of our children and ourselves. In this I speak what I believe was a universal experience in the quickened times to which I refer. "So gives He his beloved rest."

Mrs. Beith's death occurred on Tuesday, 25th September. She was in her sixty-first year. On Saturday, the 29th, we laid her body in the grave. There was an unusual interest manifested. A large assemblage—including the ministers of the Presbytery, ministers from other parts of the country, the numerous body of office-bearers of

car congregation, very many of the members, as well as others of town and country, from the neighbourhood and from a distance—came to pay the last tribute of respect to the departed dear one. The morning had been very wet; but the rain ceased, and a calm, fair, gray, mournfullooking day succeeded, as the sad procession set out on its progress. The weather continued so till the ceremonial had ended. Then the rain returned as it had been.

Who but those who have known it, can understand the desolation of spirit which comes over one bereaved as I was, when returning, for the first time, to the home lately so radiant by the presence of one who shall be seen there no more!

"The most beloved on earth
Not long survives to-day:
So music past is obsolete;
And yet 'twas sweet, 'twas passing sweet—
But now 'tis gone away.
Thus does the shade
In memory fade,
When in forsaken tomb the form beloved is laid."

On the Sabbath immediately succeeding, the Rev. Dr. Buchanan of Glasgow, and the Rev. Mr. Elder of Rothesay, preached in our church to toward and deeply-affected audiences, clothed, bout an exception, in the garments of sorrow,

—an imposing sight. Towards Dr. Buchanan the departed had cherished profound respect, gratitude, and affection, for wise counsel and friendly interference on his part, at a time of much trial and distress to us. Mr. Elder was our relative on both sides—on hers and on mine. Dr. Buchanan chose as his text, John xi. 5, 6—"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was." Mr. Elder chose as his text, 2 Thess. i. 10—"When He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

Dr. Buchanan, on being applied to, kindly furnished us with the concluding portion of his discourse, which we printed for private circulation among friends. It is appended to these pages as a much valued testimony and memorial, as well as for its own intrinsic beauty and excellence.

"Death! O dreaded Death! thou king of terrors,
And thou foe of peace! where are thy dark'ning frown,
Thine iron sceptre, and the dread array
Of horrid thoughts, with which thou'rt compassed round?
Sure none of these are here—and this is death!"

I have said that not the manner of one's death, but the character of the preceding life, testifies to gestimeness of Christian profession. That I must be a partial judge in the case before us, others may think and I cannot deny. The lapse of little more than six months since the sad event which has bereaved me, may be counted too short a space to enable me to cast aside my excess of conviction, so that I may write with due impartiality. In these circumstances, it affords me consolation and satisfaction that I have the opinion of others on which I can lean; of those who knew Mrs. Beith-who could appreciate her qualities as a wife, a mother, and a friend - who, I think, are not partial, but who, in the testimony they have been pleased spontaneously to bear. have in truth and faithfulness expressed the convictions of their mind. Whilst I record the following extracts from some of the many letters which were kindly addressed to me after her death, no doubt because they refer to one who had such a place in my heart, and whose memory will be ever fragrant to me, I do so also because of the precious views of divine truth and of the divine procedure which they set It may be that the perusal of them may comfort and edify others, as they have done me. Amen.

To all that I have said, I must further add

rendering thanks to God, that the grace He has given to me to endure this stroke has been wonderful, unaccountable. Never before was I able to apprehend and appreciate, as I have done in my experience under this affliction, the force of the expression of the promise, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding." I have found it so, not only as to its greatness and reality, but as to its entire freeness—its being God's Peace, of his sovereign goodness; to be ascribed to that, and to nothing else.

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." \*

It may not be irrelevant to the question of Mrs. Beith's usual manner of life, before the closing days came, to introduce, as preliminary to the other letters, a few extracts from some of hers, written at various times to members of her family. They

<sup>\*</sup> It may be becoming to state that the Bazaar, the interests of which were so connected with the beginning of this sad chapter, proved eminently successful. All seemed anxious, under most kindly feelings, to promote its success. The result was, that a sum, double of what we had calculated on, was produced by the sale. This had its comfort for me and others.

at least show on what her heart was set—what she habitually and supremely desired for those whom she most loved. Never did she address any of her family without introducing into her communication that which might direct all their expectations to Him from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift.

As an example of her mode of instruction by letter I give the following, from one addressed to her two youngest sons, living together in lodgings in Edinburgh whilst pursuing their studies at college:—

"Tell John, with my love, that I trust you both see to it to be out of bed in the morning to have plenty of time for your reading, and to be always in time for your classes. I hope you will keep good rules in your lodging. One of you should always ask a blessing at your meals, and the other give thanks. This may appear to you a trifle, but remember your characters are being formed for life. I confidently hope you read the Scriptures together, morning and evening, and that you alternately pray together. Believe me, that you alternately pray together. Believe me, you the one to the other as this. It is at you duty and your privilege to acknowledge and to seek his grace to guide and to keep

you. In after-life, if God spare you to have houses and families of your own, you will find the benefit and comfort of having been from your youth accustomed to social prayer. But above all, neglect not secret prayer. Remember that prayer is the pulse of the soul, and that where it exists not, the soul must be without life. Mr. Rainy's church I should earnestly recommend you to attend."

To the younger of the two she wrote some time afterwards: "Our communion seasons always remind me that you are the only one of us who has not joined the Church. Oh, may the happy time soon come, when you will give yourself, soul, body, and spirit, to the Lord. There is nothing else worth living for."

For the last three years of her life she was called on to be very much my nurse under repeated attacks of severe and dangerous sickness. Compelled for a time to desist from my labours at home, and ordered to the Continent with the expectation of recovering strength by change of air and other advantages to be enjoyed there, she accompanied me. Of the unspeakable value of her most tender, laborious, skilful, and unceasing attention, I will not speak. Both there and after our return—particularly when, for a time, we were

together in the Isle of Arran, still in pursuit of health—she had reason, so very heavy was my affliction, to look for my death, and for her widowhood.

I give one or two extracts to show how she met those trying occasions. From Biarritz, France, she writes, in April 1863, to one of her daughters:—

to make the best of it, hoping that the Lord may bless the retirement as a means for the restoration of your father, and his return to labour and usefulness in the Church. One thing here gives us much comfort—the good preaching. The service is to us long and tedious in the morning, but the preaching is most refreshing. Mr. Crowe (one of the Church of England Church Mission agents) chose yesterday as his text, Matt. vi. 5. His subject was secret prayer. He was most faithful; addressing a gay English congregation, I fear, many of them, not much accustomed to such preaching."

Again: "This is the communion season at home. May the Lord bless it as a time of refreshing to many! May He answer the prayers that will, I doubt not, ascend for us. How thankful we in Scotland should be for our land of Sabbaths and the gospel. In France there is

no Sabbath. Yet the French are an interesting people.

"Your father is still feeble, but I am in much hope that he may be better after his recent attack. It is my fond hope that when he gets over this he will be better than he has been for some time. How sweet it is to know that we are in God's hands-that our lives are in his hands; and that, although we may sometimes feel the way by which He brings us rough, yet He appoints it in very love and faithfulness; and that He will perfect what concerns us. We are shortsighted. We see but a little way before us. He knoweth the end from the beginning. Our trials are all needed. He afflicts that we may be made partakers of his holiness. Good Mr. Crowe called yesterday to bid us farewell. He has a charge somewhere in England as rector. His successor has not arrived yet, but he says he is a very good man, which we have been truly glad to hear-it is of such importance to have a minister of the right stamp in this place. I trust we may never forget the Lord's goodness to us in our recent trouble—to me a time of great alarm. Truly we were poor and needy, but the Lord thought on us. I never saw your dear father so ill. I trust the visitation may be sanctified to

us all. How soon may the strongest be brought low!"

From Arran, she writes in August 1864, at a time when my life was all but despaired of:—

"We are in good hands. It becomes us to be dumb and not to open our mouth, because God has done it. Upon the whole my faith fails not. But sometimes, when I think I am to lose him, I feel overwhelmed. God lives, blessed be our Rock! To dear papa it can be nothing but gain. Like a little child he clings to Christ, and the efficacy of his blood."

Again: "I was strong in mind when alone, but yesterday I was overtaken with deep grief. The thought of parting with him who has been my companion in all my joys and sorrows, for nearly forty years, who, above all, was my spiritual father—a tie which has bound us so close together—well-nigh broke my heart; but God, who is rich in mercy, has given me comfort. I pray, and I believe, that He will teach me to be satisfied with his will. With the poor sufferer it is all well," &c.

To me her letters, when I went from home, were written chiefly on matters connected with the business of the parish and congregation, describing circumstances as they might have

emerged; asking counsel, or suggesting what she might think advisable. The cause of Sion occupied her being. How much I sought her counsel—how much I trusted her sound judgment, all who knew our ways with each other could testify. "My heart safely trusted in her; she did me good and not evil all the days of her life."

A single specimen—they might easily be multiplied manifold—will suffice to show how, on occasion of such absences as I have referred to, she sought to strengthen my hands. Something like the following I had in every letter then addressed to me:—

"I will be thinking much of you by the end of the week. I will pray that you may be made the means of edifying and refreshing God's dear children, and of arousing those who are still dead in trespasses and sins. I will pray too that it may be a season of much comfort to your own soul. Let us both seek the sanctified use of all his dealings with us. Oh, to be enabled to acknowledge his goodness, and to show forth his praise!"

I give in full—my only other quotation from letters to me—that which I received from her, referred to, page 53 of the foregoing Narrative, announcing Matilda's death. I may be allowed to remind my readers that it speaks of our first

great grief—our first domestic sorrow. We were when she wrote it comparatively "unaccustomed to the yoke." When six weeks more had passed over our heads, and brought on our house the desolation which in that brief period came, we had learned much—we had made progress in Christian experience—in the knowledge of God's ways. "He chastised us, and we were chastised;" yes, and we were "instructed." By that time we had keard the rod, and who had appointed it.

"GLENELG MANSE, Thursday Evening.

"MY DEAR, DEAR HUSBAND,—How can I describe my anguish of mind on your account. I pray that the great God, who has so supported me, may be near to you to make his grace sufficient for you in this time of need.

"Mourn not for your dearly beloved child, for she is now in glory. Oh, if I could but tell you how willingly I gave her up to Christ, when I saw my darling so strong in faith, and so willing to leave a body of sin and death! But, my dearest, the flesh is weak. Mourning we must know for many days to come. But never had parents more cause for rejoicing than we have. Oh, be comforted! I commit you to Jesus. I can write no more. Praying that God, in his good providence, may bring you home in safety

to your sorrowing family—praying that He may uphold you in this trying hour, I am, your much afflicted," &c.

"Hear what God the Lord hath spoken,
O my people; . . . . .
"God shall rise, and shining o'er you,
Change to day the gloomy night;
He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
God your everlasting light."

The following was written in July 1851, from Stirling, when one of the children who were taken from us there was near her end. She was a child of about two and a half years old, very dear to our hearts, and had been ill for some months. I had gone from home, but was on my way back. The letter was addressed to one of her sons:—

"As I have not heard from your father this morning, I have some hope he is on his way home. My little darling has been very deathlike all day, but I trust, if it be the will of the Lord, that her poor father may be here before she is taken to her rest. Yesterday she desired Kate to sing,—

'Around the throne of God in heaven
Ten thousand children stand,
Whose sins are all through Christ forgiven,
A holy, happy band; '&c.

and, sweet lamb, she tried to join her! I believe

she will soon be in the midst of them, 'Singing glory, glory, glory!'

"I feel very sad. Nature weeps whilst faith rejoices. I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me, and hath not east me off.

"I will expect you all, God willing, on Wednesday. I would give much to have dear papa; but I must cease from man, and look to Him in whom I desire to trust."

The servant, Nanny, referred to in the Narrative, page 110, had come to reside at Stirling, a widow, with her family, some years after we had removed there. She was, of course, much about us; and when, two years ago, she died, we laid her in our own burying-ground. Mrs. Beith, writing to one of her sons on the occasion of this death, said:—

"I have been very sad. Poor Nanny's death has told on me. But I trust all her sorrows are past, and that she sleeps in Jesus. She is laid in the grave beside my three wee bairns. I have a sort of happy contented feeling that she is beside them; and I rejoice to anticipate that, in the great day, they will come forth together to meet the Lord—raised up fashioned like unto the toright with Him for ever and ever. What more can I desire!"



## CHAPTER VI.

[The Extracts that follow are from letters which, in the fulness of their hearts, ministers of the first eminence among us, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, wrote to me on the occasion of my loss. They are the spontaneous expression of what they knew from personal acquaintance, and from intercourse—in some of the cases long intercourse—with our family. I need say no more.]

"How can I write to you? I cannot be silent, and I know not how to write. We are stunned by the tidings of your bereavement. With unutterable sorrow we have learned the death of dear Mrs. Beith, in whose removal you mourn an irreparable loss; but which to her is an infinite gain. The Lord has done it in love to her (now with Himself), and in love to you, still in the wilderness, and a desolate pilgrim in it. I dare not trust myself to say more. Never have I known one in all things more a living epistle of Christ, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, than your beloved wife. And her blessedness is now

perfect, in the unclouded sumbine of his love. Soon you will rejoin her. The Master's word to you is: 'Behold, I come quickly.'

"May He fill you with the Holy Ghost; the only, the Almighty Comforter."

"The mournful news has just reached us. I write not to seek to comfort you—there is but one who can do that—but simply to say how profoundly we sympathize with you under this terrible stroke, and how earnestly we commend you and the dear ones beside you to the infinite love and compassion of our heavenly Father. Vain, indeed, is any help which man can give! 'Be not far from me, for there is none to help.' 'I shall yet praise Him for the help of his countenance.' 'He maketh the day dark with night,' but 'He turneth the shadow of death into the morning.' Help, Lord!

"I feel as if myself bereaved of a mother, and as if nothing were possible to me but tears and prayers. It is hard to believe that such a blow has fallen, and that I shall never look on that dear face again. A mother in Israel if there was one on earth—so loving, so faithful, so gentle, so trudent, so guileless, so true! Truly one of the benourable women!

"'So shall THE KING greatly desire thy beauty.... She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter the King's palace.'

"'Be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.'

"This is the other side. Alas! that, walking so much 'by sight' as we do, we should often find it so difficult to look at it. 'Lord, increase our faith!' 'A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.'"

"Need I say how deeply and affectionately I sympathize with you and your afflicted house under this sore and heavy trial, with which it has pleased our heavenly Father to visit you? But what shall we say! It is the Lord. He hath done what seemed good in his sight: and nothing seems good to Him which is not also good to his people. Even in sending an affliction so grievous, may we not see his wise and tender care, in not suffering it to fall out till He had raised you up to a measure of health and strength which may better, by his blessing, enable you to bear up

under the stroke. He who has been with you in six troubles will be with you, is with you, I am sure, in this seventh trouble also, and will not fail to make his grace sufficient for you. Your dear wife was indeed a precious gift from the Lord. I have known few who came so near to what the wife of a servant of God should be—so wise, so gentle, so loving, so true. Her very memory will be a sweet and precious legacy to you and to her children. Forgive me for running on in this way. I can only say it is my heart that speaks."

"I would have written to you sooner, but for fear of intruding upon you, to express my deep and heartfelt sympathy with you and your family under the heavy stroke which has fallen so suddenly on you. My heart bleeds for you all in the midst of your great sorrow. I am sure there are many who are mingling their tears with yours. But, alas, how little can human sympathy do for you at such a time! I believe the best way to render such sympathy effectual is to turn it into prayer. The eternal God be your refuge, and underneath be the everlasting arms. May our great sympathizing High Priest and Elder Brother draw near to you and lay his right hand on you, saying, 'Fear not, for I am the first and the last

I am He that liveth and was dead, and am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and hell.' Oh, how precious and all-powerful is the sympathy of Jesus! May He now pour its full tide into your wounded and desolate heart. As one whom his mother comforteth, so may He comfort you. And may you be able yet to say as one did (Mr. J. H. Evans) in speaking of what he calls the greatest affliction of his life, the death of his partner, many years after it had happened: -'I now feel that I never could have believed. even from the testimony of God's own Word, unless in this school of bitter pangs the Comforter Himself had taught me, that there was a brother. not only in that adversity, but born for it; and that the great and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, could, in my own nature, stoop so low as to place his arms, low as I was, lower still-still beneath me'

"The loss which you and your family have sustained in the death of such a wife, and such a mother, must indeed seem to you irreparable. But it must be your unspeakable comfort to feel that those very qualities of mind, and graces of heart and life, which so endeared her to you all, only made her all the riper and meeter for being a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Doubtless her work here was done, and the Master called her because He had need of her to serve in a higher place and a holier ministry than in the Church below.

"Oh that all these sorrows and bereavements may be chastening, mellowing, and ripening us for that nobler work, and that glorious life and immortality. In looking back, after many years, on his heavy affliction, Mr. Evans could say: 'I now feel as if I could not have gone to heaven without it! And doubtless there is a necessity for all our trials, although we seldom see it at the There is not so much as one superfluous drop in the cup of sorrow which the Lord gives his loved ones to drink. In nothing is He so economic as in the pains He inflicts on them, while in all their afflictions He is Himself afflicted. If the members suffer, so must the Head. And as the Head is now triumphant amid the glories of heaven, all the members must follow: so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore let us comfort one another with these words"

"Allow me to express our very deep sympathy with you and your household in your very heavy affliction. I was startled when I first heard of

Mrs. Beith's illness; and as that illness deepened, I often thought how sad the blow must be when it fell.

"Though none could know as you and your family, all who knew Mrs. Beith felt her power as a 'mother in Israel.' There always appeared an assemblage of Christian graces, lighted up with the sunshine of the greatest of them all—love for Christ.

"She has gone to the mountains of myrrh and frankincense; seen those she often saw, and longed to see again; and seen Him whom, having not seen, she loved—in whom, though she saw Him not, yet believing, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. May your heart, and the hearts of your sorrowing household, be found waiting on the Lord. To Him you will not grudge the keeping of your graceful treasure. He will keep that which you commit to Him till the great day, and then restore you all to one another in the deathless kingdom of the Father."

"I scarcely know whether I should thus venture to intrude on your sorrow; most certainly I could not interpose between you and the Great Comforter, for oh! I do trust you are realizing the blessedness of being alone with Him. But,

after a stop a secretar against it. I feel compelled to give some was to our feelings in monely assurme wat him much we have you and yours on our hearts at such a time and under such a blow as him Gai has poured the wine of automichment very regimenty into your com; but is He not also postering the wine of commission even more presidenty into your hours! Surely her had not He hiddhes se two precious ingredistrict in it; and yet they are not two, but one, for the first is part and percel of the second. Yet only a part of it; for He who, in his faithfulness, gave her the victorious faith, can and will give to von also a faith equally victorious in this sore trial, as well as in every other. The dear 'help' that was so 'meet' for you has been taken away. for this, among other gracious objects, that you may realize more than ever run Help that is meeter still and who will never leave nor forsake 'Hast thou not known!' &c .- Isaiah xl. 28-31. Yes, you do know this. Then why should I remind you of it, but that God uses oftentimes a 'suckling's mouth' to 'ordain strength' to those that are sore broken! Bear with me, then, in letting fall those few words to one at whose feet it rather behoves me to sit and then; for while I would my, like Eliphaz (Job iv. 2, &c.), I would not, like him, suppose that you had forgotten (Job v. 7-11).

"But I must not further trespass on the 'multitude of your thoughts within you,' lest I interfere with the concluding part of that verse, Psalm xciv. 19."

"Allow me to express my deep sympathy with you in your severe affliction, into which I can enter all the more from our bereavement, although yours comes still nearer to yourself, and is such as none can know except by sad experience. But I think I do know something of the worth of her whom the Lord has taken from you to Himself: and one prizes such worth as hers all the more when we find how rare it is, even among believers; for I do not know many who seemed to me to hold so high a place among the ransomed of the Lord. Your loss is a great one indeed, to yourself, and your family, and the Church; but surely there are few who will sing with a louder song to Him that loved us, and washed us in his own blood. For ourselves, we may say, 'Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent."

"In common with thousands, we both very

dearly loved her whose loss you mourn. She was one among a thousand—one whom no one could meet without loving her, and whom removal makes the earth sensibly colder and poerer. A rich and gifted nature—a loving heart, early sanctified by grace—a mind largely dowered with gifts and graces—ripe experience in the school of Christ,—all in rare measure, went to form the noble woman, the loving wife and mother, the bright sunny Christian, the unfailing friend, the unwearied worker for Christ. What a beautiful life! what a blessed death!

"I never knew one—and I have heard not a few say the same—whose presence shed a happier sunlight over her own household, or who won for herself so tender a place in the hearts of such a wide circle of friends.

"The Conqueror and Abolisher of death has taken her home. Her loved ones gone before; and *Annie*" and she, now side by side, sing the new song.

<sup>\*</sup> The wife of her eldest son, who died three years ago. By a very striking providence—as it seemed to us, for various reasons—this sad event occurred in our house at Stirling. The death was very unexpected. She had come on a short visit with her husband, being then in the enjoyment of high health. She was in the very prime of life. Within one short week, amidst circumstances deeply stating, she was removed. A time not unlike what I have bearing the same name, passed over us when the Lord came

"It will be a glorious meeting, when you, 'a few short years of evil past,' and the rest of that happy circle of which she was the centre here, shall all stand together before the throne of the Lamb!

"Could we dwell less on the little partings of earth, and more on the happy meetings on the glorious resurrection morning!

"'Jesus wept' is the most healing balm. Meanwhile, for the heart that is smitten with sorrow, may He who counts the sighs and the smiles of his own, apply that balm to your spirit.

"Excuse this note. I shrunk from writing, as

to receive unto Himself the younger. The same parties, generally, surrounded the death-bed. Similar experience as I have narrated prevailed there.

I will not, in so short a space as I can venture to employ here, trust myself to speak as I might do of the radiant creature who was thus separated from our family-circle; so full of tender affection—in her always an overflowing fountain—so cultivated in her natural character, and so graceful in all her bearing; particularly, so taught of God, so reliant on his grace, so devoted to his service, so unpremitting in every work of faith and labour of love: a wife and mother of most ardent heart; a daughter to us, sincerely felt to be so, as truly so any of those born to ourselves; kind, considerate, constant; the youngest except two brothers of the family-circle which once gathered around her father's board—the late Mr. Fleming of Claremont—and so one whom they almost idolized, yet who sustained no injury, in the simplicity and grace of her character, from their universal regard.

Her end was as triumphant as her life had been exemplary. My respected correspondent has written that which was joyfully anticipated and gloried in by her who, the later of the two by a short space, followed her friend into the glorious presence of the Lord. They and theirs, now with them before the throne, shall never more know sorrow; neither shall they know separation, world without end.

I have a profound sense of the sacredness of domestic sorrow, and of the poorness of human sympathy. The only sympathy which is true, strong, and healing, is Immanuel. But not writing at all would seem cold, and do violence to one's nature. So I send this line to give vent, in however small a way, to my own sharp sense of loss.

"Help us to quicken our pace; to fill every day with serving Christ; to crowd the work of years into months, and of months into days;—to follow those who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises.

"Christ makes heaven more homelike by removing our loved ones thither. This is one way in which He is 'preparing a place for you.' Blessed are the homesick, for they shall reach home!"

"Experience has taught me, that under the first emotions of sorrow it is best to have the mind as far as possible from outward distractions, even distractions of the truest human and brotherly sympathies. Any sympathy which I can feel is with you in your present trial. The removal of a mother in Israel is matter of serious thought to the whole Church; and I cannot but

feel it as somewhat personal, because of the motherliness of the beloved departed to others of my family, beside those with whose dust hers must now intermingle. And how blessed a hope is that of resurrection unto life, and with what glorious anticipations does faith invest it! And how blessed a privilege for you, that, though you must weep, it is more for yourself than for her! Besides this, it is not to be overlooked that you have had a longer lease of her as a help-meet than falls to the lot of many. But, above all, 'the time is short; so that they who mourn should be as they who mourn not,' They alone are supremely happy, the days of whose mourning are ended. I read somewhere of a minister who wrote to a brother regarding the death of his wife in these words: 'Rejoice with me, rejoice with me, for - has escaped!' And, very dear brother, I trust to hear that you possess your soul in patience, and are 'still,' knowing that 'He is God.'

"The God of all grace and consolation be with you all, that, though sorrowing, you may be rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The two letters which follow are from clerical friends in the Highlands, who knew us in the time of our first great sorrow, to whom allusion is made in the Narrative:---

"I have the mournful information that your late beloved wife has departed this life. Most sincerely do I beg to sympathize and condole with you and your dear children under your sad and sore bereavement. By that mournful bereavement von have lost a most affectionate wife, an helpmeet indeed, and a mother in Israel. also your dear children have lost a most affectionate mother and an exemplary Christian, who always adorned the doctrine of her God and Saviour by a life and conversation becoming the gospel. end. I am happy to learn, was not only full of peace but of triumph in Christ - the very thing which might be expected in the case of one who always rested, even in the most trying circumstances, on the divine Redeemer. I can never forget the Christian fortitude and the soulsubmission she manifested under that trying and mournful bereavement which you met with in Glenelg.

"But the whole praise and glory are due to Him who supported her, and who has carried her scathless through all troubles and trials, and brought her safely to eternal felicity.

"Why then should we mourn as do others who

have no hope? In a short time you, my dear sir, will meet her to part no more, where sorrow and sighing shall flee away. I am thinking that the consideration of her being now before the throne above, singing the songs of redeeming love, may lead your mind to meditate more and more on what is going on there.

"Every friend of ours brought home to heaven should be an additional attraction to us, drawing our minds after them, in our thoughts surrounding the throne, contemplating the blessed work they have there—adoring Him who loved them and who hath washed them in his own blood.

"My prayer is, that the God of Jacob may be your Sun and Shield, your Guide and Comforter, even unto death."

"I have seen the loss you have sustained in the removal to another world of one who was to you indeed a helpmeet—an ornament to her husband and family—a mother in Israel—and a good model of what a minister's wife should be. That she has been removed from your side and from your domestic circle, will be felt a desolation, and human nature will feel the blank keenly—bitterly. It is well it should be so. Natural affections are wrong only in the excess of them.

exercise. As implanted in us by the hand of God they are essential to our happiness. All that was excessive in your case hitherto will be undergoing a purifying process. While I sympathize with you, dear brother, in regard to the breach that has so recently, it would seem so suddenly, been made in your family-circle, I much rather congratulate you. To her who is gone, the grave is a bed, death is a sleep, till Jesus Christ come to awaken and take her to Himself, soul and body re-united, never to taste of separation from Him, or from all her friends. Moderate sorrow, then, and a blessed hope remain for you until you join the large family above, after you have served your day and generation here—where sorrow and sighing are the lot of the best. I, too, have suffered bereavement. Let us, then, be helpers of one another's joy by prayer and affectionate regard."

Although unwilling to multiply unnecessarily these extracts, I cannot refrain from inserting the following from letters of ministers who now fill respectable positions in our Church, and who, at sundry periods within the last few years, for short seasons acted in the capacity of my assistants in the work of my congregation. The two previous

extracts are a testimony to early days. Those now inserted are a testimony to the latest times of her who is gone from us:—

"It was with great surprise and deep sorrow that I read the announcement of the very great loss you have sustained in the sudden death of Mrs. Beith; for though I had heard that she was seriously ill, I had no idea her illness was so serious, or would so speedily have so sorrowful a result.

"Her loss, irreparable to you on earth, will be very deeply and widely felt by the large circle by whom she was so universally beloved and esteemed: and by few more so than by myself, for much in many ways I owe to her as well as to you-and her constant and truly sincere kindness to me while I was, for only too short a time, privileged to labour under you, I can never forget; and there are many I am sure who will only now realize in her loss all that she really was. regret much that I will be unavoidably prevented being present with you to-morrow to pay her a last tribute of affection and respect, much as I would have desired to have the melancholy satisfaction of following her remains to the restingplace till Christ appear. And I cannot further intrude into the sacredness of your grief except to say, that I, in common with all who ever knew her, must now rejoice that she is 'for ever with the Lord;' and that when next our eyes behold her, it will be in the presence and in the glory of that Saviour whom she loved, and for whom she lived, and to whom she died."

"I feel that it will be difficult for me to put in any shape the feelings of sympathy I have for you and your family under your sore bereavement.

"It would show but little knowledge of what sorrow is did I seem to think that, under such a trial, any number of letters from those who mourn with you could remove it; and it would also show but a slight acquaintance with the Christian's faith, and with the heart of Him who is the God of all comfort, did I not believe that even now you are being wonderfully and tenderly upborne by the great Consoler.

"It is marvellous to see how God makes his people carry blessings to their lips in a cup of affliction; and how, too, the larger the cup, the heavier the sorrow, the greater the measure of good it brings. The tie between husband and wife that has been severed—especially where both are the people of God—parts only with pain; but how much more when that tie has been

hallowed by the experiences and associations of many happy years; when it has been strengthened by mutual and frequent 'sorrowings and rejoicings'-a tie forged by passing through the fire together, and by comforting each other at such seasons. And the loss, too, of one whose fervent piety had been so long and thoroughly tried -these bygone experiences all make the sorrow greater than the heart itself knows. And yet all that makes the sorrow greater tends to bring a fuller measure of comfort-a clearer note of praise. Her long and well tried faith—all that gave you proof of the grace of God in her-those are blessed evidences that it is well with her who now sleeps, Even the many years of wedded life, the thought of which is fitted to make grief the more bitter, also to the ear of Christian longing say the separation shall not be long-the union shall be endless

"That the consolations of the God of all comfort may abound to you and to your family, is our united prayer."

"It would be vain for me to attempt to write at length to you of the consolation of Him who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' You need no such instruction. Only may grace be given to each of us in the hour of sorrow and trial to rest on God himself, our very present help in time of trouble. I shall ever cherish the memory of Mrs. Beith-for she was lavish in kindness to me; and in company with all who knew her I cannot but sorrow for her, for my own sake, as a dearly esteemed friend. We feel for you, indeed, and pray that God may be your strength, and that in the burden and heaviness of the spirit, the gracious Redeemer himself may abide with you. May we all be taught to set our affection on things above, and may all the near relations of life be consecrated by the love of Christ. Then they will be doubly dear and holy while they endure, and then, too, we shall be the better able to bear, in the resignation and hope of a true faith, the hour of separation—believing that there comes also the hour of blessed re-union."

Very many more letters of a similar character—distinguished for excellence in themselves, for their beauty, and for the affection they express—are in my possession. Did I deem it expedient they might all be inserted. Those I have given afford sufficient illustration of the impression which she, to whom they refer, produced on the minds of all her friends.

## Close of Sermon,

Preached in Free North Church, Stirling, 30th September 1866, on the occasion of the death of Mrs. Beith, by the Rev. Dr. Buchanan, Glasgow.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was."—John xi. 5, 6.

"One thing more I must say before I close, though, indeed, I hardly know how to say it. My hearers cannot have failed to notice that, once and again, in prosecuting this discourse, I have been led by the subject of it to the very verge of a case of bereavement which does not need to be named, and which is, this day, casting a cloud over the minds, and lying heavy on the hearts, of us all.

"Of that event, here and now, I can scarcely trust myself to speak. Beneath that roof on which the stroke has fallen, ties have been broken the closest and most endearing that exist on earth; and a blank has been left in some hearts, and especially in one, that can never again, in this world, be filled. Nor is it only within the domestic circle immediately affected by this trying dispensation that the heavy loss sustained will be long and deeply mourned. There are iew,

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believe, if any, in this large congregation, on whom the sad event in question has not come with all the force of a personal calamity. This I know, that there are very many in other places who are at this moment sharing in your grief.

"Nor need we wonder that it should be so. A sympathy so widely diffused and so deeply felt is but the tribute justly due to one who so truly and tenderly sympathized with others.

"When an inspired apostle would set before us the picture of a true mother in Israel, he uses such words as these: 'If she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.' In the history of the early Church that attractive picture seems, through grace, to have been often realized. And in the person of her, who has been so recently and so suddenly taken from the midst of us, we have the proof before us, that what grace did in the beginning of the gospel, it can do and is doing still. The mere presence of such a character and life is a blessing to all around. It exerts insensibly, upon those who come within the range of its influence. a sweetening, hallowing, and elevating influence, the full value of which it is not easy to estimate.

It is a heritage which, like the faith that dwelt first in Lois and Eunice, has, under God, a constant tendency to perpetuate itself among those that come after; and thus to make the righteous a true 'seed of blessing' to the world.

"May those whose privilege it has been to have such an example set before them be stirred up by it to be followers of her, and of all those who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises! 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!' Yes; but if we would share in that blessedness, we must live in the Lord. She of whom I now speak lived in the Lord-and in the Lord she died! And what language can adequately describe the blessedness of such a death! We read in our old Scottish history of a youthful martyr, who, as he stood on the scaffold, where he was about to give up his life as a witness for Christ's cause and truth, looked calmly down on the thronging crowd who had assembled to witness his execution, and said, 'Farewell kindred and friends! farewell father and mother! farewell this world, and all earthly delights!' And then, lifting his beaming face upwards to the skies, joyfully added, 'Welcome heaven! welcome Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! welcome eternal life and glory! yea, welcome death!'

"Perhaps there are many who regard that touching utterance as a mere burst of high-wrought feeling, to which there is, and can be, nothing parallel in the actual experience of the private Christian, whose lot is to die in a common sick-chamber, away from all the excitement of such a scene as that to which I have just referred.

"Had it been the privilege of those who think so to watch the last days and hours of her whom we mourn, they would think so no more. Her leave-taking of time was as calm, and her near contemplation of death and of that spiritual and eternal world that lies beyond it, were as confident and joyful as if, like Stephen, she had seen heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Her peace, the peace of God, was settled and serene: never shaken or clouded, even for a moment. Her hope was like an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. Her simple, childlike faith, was firm as the Rock of Ages to which it clung. She was not only willing, but waiting and longing to depart and to be with Christ. 'King of kings! Lord of glory! my only Saviour!' she was heard saying, 'why tarry thy chariot-wheels?' And at last, when his time did draw near, she welcomed his approach with the words, 'He is

coming now!—I hear the sound of his chariot!
—I am going home! "Even so, come, Lord
Jesus!"

"On a theme so tender and so sacred I may not further enlarge. I add only this one thing more. Among the very latest of her farewell messages was one to you. It was to tell you that, with her dying breath, she prayed for your Territorial Mission, and commended it to your earnest care. Regard it, then, as a sacred trust bequeathed by one who greatly loved both it and you. Hold up the hands and encourage the heart of your minister in watching over it, and in watching for your souls. He will, more than ever, need the solace and the strength which a pastor derives from his people's sympathy and his people's prayers.

"And now, may the God of all grace and consolation keep both him and you, by his own mighty power, through faith, unto everlasting life! AMEN!"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Glory, honour, praise, and power, Be unto the Lamb for ever; Jesus Christ is our Redeemer— Halleluiah! praise the Lord!"



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